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BHUTAN

Gender Equality Diagnostic of Selected Sectors

March 2014



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Message from the Chair

National Commission for Women and Children
Royal Government of Bhutan

The National Commission for Women and Children (NCWC) is privileged to take the lead in the landmark publication *Bhutan Gender Equality Diagnostic of Selected Sectors*. As the nodal agency for gender mainstreaming in Bhutan, NCWC will continue to support the development of the Gender Equality Diagnostic as it provides updated baseline information on the situation of women and men, as well as the gender analyses of selected sectors deemed crucial to Bhutan's achievement of its development goal of gross national happiness. As a useful gender resource, the publication will facilitate gender mainstreaming—a priority of the Royal Government and a mandate of NCWC. This effort will include developing gender-responsive legislation and policies, coordinating gender mainstreaming efforts of various government agencies through their gender focal points, and monitoring and reporting on gender equality results.

The publication is timely and works perfectly with the newly developed Gender Monitoring System developed by NCWC. As the Gender Equality Diagnostic provides baseline gender information and analyses, the Gender Monitoring System will track the government's progress in achieving its gender equality targets. Many more developments can be anticipated from this knowledge product.

Under the guidance of the Eleventh Five-Year Plan, NCWC recommends the complementary use of the Gender Equality Diagnostic by key sector ministries, local government units (*dzongkhags*, *gewogs*, and *thromdes*), nongovernment organizations, and international development partners working on all programs and activities in Bhutan. Gender inclusion will ultimately contribute to building the foundations in the pursuit of gross national happiness, which are the achievement of sustainable and equitable socioeconomic development, preservation and promotion of culture, conservation and sustainable utilization of the environment, and good governance.

I am happy to note that working with the Asian Development Bank and the United Nations on the development of the Gender Equality Diagnostic further strengthened our partnership toward achieving gender equality.



Dorji Choden
Minister for Works and Human Settlement
Royal Government of Bhutan

Foreword

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has a long-standing practice of preparing gender assessments to supplement information on the development of country partnership strategies. In Bhutan, the assessment exercise also aimed to result in a document that would support the work of the National Commission for Women and Children (NCWC) and the Royal Government of Bhutan's development partners. The *Bhutan Gender Equality Diagnostic of Selected Sectors* is therefore the result of collaboration among NCWC, ADB, and the United Nations (UN) Gender Task Force agencies active in Bhutan.

The document aims to provide the government and its development partners with a practical resource to support gender mainstreaming. Information and analyses in the document are presented by sector to facilitate use by ADB staff and others tasked with policy and program development and implementation. The eight sectors covered were identified jointly with NCWC and the UN Gender Task Force. These are agriculture and rural livelihoods, education, energy, environment, private sector development, transport, urban development, and work and unemployment.

Each sector-focused chapter starts by providing a brief outline of sector characteristics and challenges in order to provide a context for the discussion of gender equality issues relevant to sectoral activities and outcomes. This is followed by a summary of government commitments to support women or gender equality in the sector and suggestions about further issues and opportunities to consider as part of policy and strategy development. The emphasis on substantiating points with data wherever possible makes the discussion particularly useful. Two other elements that enhance the practical value of the document are the “tip sheets” on integrating gender perspectives prepared for each sector and the references to further resources available online.

The document has benefited from the contributions of many stakeholders, including government ministries and departments, development agencies, and women's groups. NCWC had a particularly important role in providing overall guidance to the investigation and in managing consultations. A large number of sector and gender specialists from ADB and the UN reviewed the draft and provided inputs that strengthened the document.

Given all the effort, resources, and expertise that went into the *Bhutan Gender Equality Diagnostic of Selected Sectors*, I am confident that the document will contribute to the partnership of ADB and the Royal Government of Bhutan in support of our joint goals of gender equality, poverty reduction, and economic growth.



Juan Miranda

Director General, South Asia Department
Asian Development Bank

Preface

The *Bhutan Gender Equality Diagnostic of Selected Sectors*, which was produced through a partnership of the United Nations (UN) in Bhutan with the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the National Commission for Women and Children (NCWC), is the first document to focus in this manner on gender equality and women's position in Bhutan. It looks at eight priority sectors identified by ADB and UN Bhutan in close consultation with NCWC and highlights issues and opportunities to be considered when taking gender mainstreaming forward in each sector.

Bhutan has made great strides in creating a favorable legal and policy environment to address social relations of gender. However, the Gender Equality Diagnostic shows that there are gender gaps in areas such as education, employment, and representation in decision making and that gender-based violence is a problem in both rural and urban areas. Experience elsewhere shows that political will is required to translate words and intentions into effective action and results. Another critical ingredient is adequate resources—both financial and technical—to support the implementation of gender-sensitive laws and policies. The national budget reflects a government's social and economic plans and priorities, and has the advantage of clearly showing the programs and initiatives that are supported with resources. Gender-responsive budgeting, therefore, can be a powerful instrument for translating political commitment into concrete action.

For this reason, the UN System in Bhutan—in partnership with the Department of National Budgets/Ministry of Finance, NCWC, Gross National Happiness Commission, Department of Local Governance, and civil society groups—has introduced gender-responsive planning and budgeting as a means to support the implementation of the gender equality agenda as laid out in the government's Eleventh Five-Year Plan. Gender-responsive planning and budgeting will enable a focus on issues that have often been overlooked, including the unpaid care economy that absorbs much of women's time in tasks such as caring for children and dependent elderly or responding to community needs.

We hope that the *Bhutan Gender Equality Diagnostic of Selected Sectors* will serve as a guide for further efforts to implement policy commitments to equal outcomes for women and men. In so doing, the Bhutan Gender Equality Diagnostic will support the achievement of the socioeconomic goals and balanced approach to development that are shared by the UN and the Royal Government of Bhutan.



Christina Carlson

UN Resident Coordinator
UN Bhutan

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The National Commission for Women and Children (NCWC) warmly thanks the individuals and agencies who contributed to the preparation of the *Gender Equality Diagnostic of Selected Sectors*. The study and the related consultations were ably guided by Sonam Penjor and Tshewang Lhumo of NCWC Women's Division, with the strong support of Phintsho Choeden, director general of NCWC. The national network of gender focal points was a major source of information at both the early stages and in providing feedback on drafts. Local officials in Samdrup Jongkhar and Sarpang generously offered their time and opinions. NCWC also thanks Johanna Schalkwyk for bringing together information and inputs from all these sources into a concise and useful publication. Finally, the support provided by Francesco Tornieri of the Asian Development Bank and Angela Rossinni Ison of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women enabled us to complete this work and give it wide distribution.

Abbreviations

ADB	Asian Development Bank
BLSS	Bhutan Living Standards Survey
BMIS	Bhutan Multiple Indicator Survey
CSMI	cottage, small, and medium industries
ECCD	Early Childhood Care and Development (policy)
GDP	gross domestic product
GECDP	gender, environment, climate change, disaster risk reduction, and poverty
GNH	gross national happiness
HRD	human resource development
ICT	information and communication technology
ILO	International Labour Organization
LFS	Labour Force Survey
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
NCWC	National Commission for Women and Children
NPAG	National Plan of Action for Gender
NWF	National Work Force
PES	payment for ecosystem services
RNR	renewable natural resources
TVET	technical and vocation education and training
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund

Glossary

<i>Chiwog</i>	a unit under a <i>Gewog</i>
<i>Druk Gyalpo</i>	the King of Bhutan
<i>Dzong</i>	fortress, used as an administrative center in each <i>Dzongkhag</i>
<i>Dzongdag</i>	district administrator (appointed by national government)
<i>Dzongka</i>	the national language of Bhutan
<i>Dzongkhag</i>	district (20 in Bhutan)
<i>Dzongkhag Tshogdu</i>	elected district council
<i>Gewog</i>	county (205 across Bhutan)
<i>Gewog Tshogde</i>	elected county committee
<i>Gup</i>	head of a <i>Gewog Tshogde</i> , directly elected
<i>Mangmi</i>	deputy head of <i>Gewog Tshogde</i> , directly elected
<i>Thromde Tshogde</i>	elected municipal committee, larger municipalities (Class A <i>Thromde</i>)
<i>Thrompon</i>	head of <i>Thromde Tshogde</i> , directly elected
<i>Thumis</i>	elected members of the <i>Thromde Tshogde</i>
<i>Tshogpas</i>	term for member of an association or committee
<i>Tshogchung</i>	appointed committee, smaller municipalities (Class B and <i>Yenlag Thromde</i>)
<i>Tshogpa</i>	general term for association or committee
<i>Yenlag Thromde</i>	satellite town

Overview

Summary	
Introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This chapter provides general background and highlights a number of key points about gender equality and women's position. • Other chapters provide analyses for eight key sectors and aim to be practical resources to assist with gender mainstreaming.
Country context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bhutan is small in area and population, with rugged mountain terrain. • Change has been very rapid since the early 1960s in education opportunities, health indicators, infrastructure, and the economy. • Development challenges include rural poverty, rapid urbanization, a small private sector, youth unemployment, and emerging gender gaps. • Bhutan made the transition to a constitutional monarchy, with a new Constitution in 2008 and national elections in 2008 and 2013. • The concept of gross national happiness guides development.
Key points about gender equality and women's position in Bhutan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender equality indicators suggest that Bhutan compares well with some but not all countries in the region. • Many people believe that Bhutan has no significant gender equality issues, but this view may reflect gender stereotypes and norms more than evidence. • Young men and women have different views about the existence of discrimination and about women's potential for leadership. • Examining assumptions is a key component of gender analysis. • Gender gaps are evident in educational outcomes and unemployment. • The much slower movement of women than men out of agriculture reflects constraints faced by women. • Women farmers face particular challenges. • Women's workloads are heavier than those of men. • Tolerance of domestic violence is high in all social groups. • Women are poorly represented in decision-making positions. • Gross national happiness assessments have found that women are less happy than men.
Policy environment for progress toward gender equality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The major sources of state policy promote attention to equality. • The National Plan of Action for Gender accompanied the Tenth Five-Year Plan, 2008–2013. • The Eleventh Five-Year Plan, 2013–2018 targets a more gender-friendly environment for women's participation. • Additional tools are used to support gender mainstreaming.
National machinery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All ministries and agencies have gender equality responsibilities. • The National Commission for Women and Children has a strategic policy and advisory role. • The network of gender focal points is another key mechanism. • Local governments also have an important role.

Introduction

This overview chapter provides additional general background for the sector-focused chapters that follow. It provides a brief review of the country context, highlights key points about gender equality and women's position, and summarizes the policy and institutional context for addressing gender equality issues.

The eight chapters that follow each focus on a specific sector. Sectors to be included were identified jointly by Bhutan's National Commission for Women and Children (NCWC), the Asian Development Bank (ADB), and the Gender Task Force of United Nations agencies working in Bhutan. The sectors covered are

- agriculture and rural livelihoods;
- education;
- energy;
- environment;
- private sector development;
- transport: roads and services;
- urban development; and
- work and unemployment.

The chapters are intended to be practical resources for government officers and development partners. They aim to assist with gender mainstreaming in each sector, in accordance with government policy.

Each sector-focused chapter starts by providing some context about sector characteristics and challenges. Gender equality issues relevant to sector activities and outcomes are then set out, substantiated with data where possible. Government commitments to support women or gender equality in the sector are briefly highlighted. Each chapter concludes with a number of suggestions about issues and opportunities to consider as part of policy and strategy development in the sector. For each chapter, there are two appendices to support follow-up, one providing a tip sheet to assist with gender mainstreaming in planning and analysis in the sector, and the other on useful resources for gender analysis.¹

¹ As many users of the document are likely to consult individual chapters rather than the whole document, a few points that apply to more than one sector are

Country Context

Bhutan is a small kingdom in the eastern Himalayas, situated between the People's Republic of China in the north and India in the south, with Nepal to the west. It is mostly mountainous and only 3% of the land is cultivated or considered agricultural; another 4% is meadow or pastureland, and more than 70% is covered by forest. In 2012, the population was estimated to be 720,700.²

Bhutan has experienced an accelerating process of change since the 1960s when it opened to the world and started the process of planned development. Since then, there has been a major program of road building to connect isolated communities within Bhutan and to connect Bhutan with India. A system of public education was established and the state now provides free education through preprimary to class X. The development of hydropower provided export earnings and the means to fund the country's socioeconomic development, as well as electricity for households and industry. The nonagricultural private sector is growing, including both larger and cottage-scale manufacturing industries, transport and communications, hotels and restaurants, financial services, and retail trade.

As a result of such developments, conditions in Bhutan differ greatly from what they were only decades ago. Whereas student numbers before the first five-year plan in 1961 were only about 400, now fewer than 2% of children aged 6–16 years are out of school. Almost 98% of children enrolled in preprimary reach the last grade of primary school, and 85% reach class X.³ Life expectancy has increased from 47.5 years in 1984 to 66.3 years in 2005.⁴ Maternal mortality has been significantly reduced to an estimated 180 deaths per 100,000 live births in 2010.⁵ By 2012, almost all urban households and 87% of rural

deliberately repeated for ease of use.

² National Statistics Bureau. *Statistical Yearbook of Bhutan 2012*. pp. xiv, 3.

³ Ministry of Education. 2012. *Annual Education Statistics, 2012*. pp. 7, 13, 28, 69–70 (Table 11.1).

⁴ UNICEF Bhutan. 2013. Health, Nutrition, Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene. *Thematic Analysis Series, Bhutan Multiple Indicator Survey*. Thimphu. p. 9.

⁵ See discussion in next section.

households were electrified, and 91% of rural households owned a mobile phone.⁶ Bhutan has transformed itself from an economy that was almost entirely based on subsistence not much more than 50 years ago into a middle-income country with rapidly rising human development indicators.

Along with remarkable socioeconomic progress there are also a number of continuing and new challenges. Poverty levels remain high, particularly in rural areas.⁷ Differences in living conditions and opportunities between rural and urban areas are among the factors fueling rapid rural–urban migration, which is outstripping the capacity of urban settlements to provide adequate housing and basic services. Migration has also resulted in labor shortages in agriculture, which is particularly felt by women, who have been less likely to migrate and now predominate in the rural and agricultural labor force.

It is no longer possible, as it was in the past, for government to absorb most educated youth, but the private sector remains small and enterprises have concerns about the skills and job-readiness of youth emerging from the education system. Youth unemployment is high, particularly among women. Further, unemployment is high among women at all levels of education. Development challenges facing Bhutan include the gender gaps that are evident in educational outcomes and labor market experience.⁸

In addition to these socioeconomic changes, there has been major change in the political system. Led by His Majesty the Fourth Druk Gyalpo, Bhutan made a transition from an absolute monarchy to a democratic, constitutional monarchy. The Constitution of the Kingdom of Bhutan came into effect in 2008. The first parliamentary elections were held the same year and the second round

took place in 2013. It is a bicameral system: the National Council consists of 20 members each elected to represent a *Dzongkhag* (district), who are joined by five members appointed by the King; the National Assembly consists of 47 members, each elected by a constituency.

Another important element in politics and administration is the decentralization to local governments that has also been under way for several decades. The Local Government Act of Bhutan, 2009 provides the most recent statement of the powers and responsibilities of *Dzongkhags* (of which there are 20), *Gewogs* (205 in total), and *Thromdes* (municipalities, which now number only 4).

- Bhutan's approach to development is shaped by the concept of gross national happiness (GNH), as mandated by the 2008 Constitution.⁹ The framework to guide the application of this approach is based on four themes or pillars:
- sustainable and equitable socioeconomic development,
- preservation and promotion of culture,
- conservation and sustainable use and management of the environment, and
- strengthening good governance.¹⁰

Five-year plans have been used since 1961 to set out a coordinated approach across sectors. The Eleventh Five-Year Plan, 2013–2018 includes a series of key results linked to the four GNH pillars, both at the national level and for each sector, as well as strategies to achieve these results. Local governments at both the *Dzongkhag* and *Gewog* levels also prepare plans within the same framework.

Key Points about Gender Equality and Women's Position in Bhutan

- ***Gender equality indicators suggest that Bhutan compares well with some but not all countries in the region***

Bhutan differs greatly in size from its closest regional neighbors and also differs in the history of planned development, but even

⁶ National Statistics Bureau. *Bhutan Living Standards Survey 2012 Report*. (BLSS 2012). Tables 7.9 and 8.3.

⁷ In 2010, 26% of the population was poor, according to one source. Gross National Happiness Commission. 2012. *Guidelines for the Preparation of the Eleventh Five-Year Plan, 2013–2018*. p. 9. However, lower estimates based on a poverty line of Nu1,705 per month (approximately \$32) are provided by the National Statistics Bureau. 2013. *Poverty Analysis Report 2012*. pp. 9–10.

⁸ See chapters on education, private sector development, and work and unemployment.

⁹ *Constitution of the Kingdom of Bhutan*. 2008. Article 9 (Principles of State Policy), Clause 2.

¹⁰ Gross National Happiness Commission. 2013. *Eleventh Five-Year Plan, 2013–2018*. Vol. 1. pp. 5–8.

so, it is interesting to consider how Bhutan compares on some key indicators (Box 1).

As assessed by the gender inequality index, the People's Republic of China is the least unequal of neighboring countries, followed by Thailand, whose per capita gross national income is similar. Sri Lanka and Myanmar are two other regional neighbors that are less unequal than Bhutan, although Myanmar has achieved this at a considerably lower per capita gross national income. However, the index rates Bhutan as less unequal than Nepal, Bangladesh, Pakistan and India.

Three of the countries listed in Box 1 have strikingly lower maternal mortality ratios than all others in the region. This ratio provides a general insight into the position of women because it reflects a combination of sociocultural factors that affect women's health and access to health care, as well as the health services and facilities available. The maternal mortality ratio remains high in Bhutan at 180 deaths per 100,000 live births in 2010; but this has come down from an estimated 430 deaths in 2000, a significant achievement in a short period.¹¹

The adolescent fertility rate also provides useful insights as early childbearing generally implies greater health risks and narrowed opportunities for acquiring education and skills, and thus poorer economic prospects for girls. Box 1 shows a wide range in regional adolescent fertility rates, with Bhutan in the middle. A recent study suggests that early pregnancy is a major contributing factor to the gender gap in tertiary education in Bhutan.¹²

Literacy for women aged 15 and over is lower in Bhutan than in all other countries listed in Box 1, and there is a significant gap between male and female literacy levels (similar to the male–female gap in India, Nepal, and Pakistan). Bhutan has made rapid progress

Box 1. Bhutan compares well with some but not all countries in the region on gender equality indicators

	Gender inequality index 2012	Maternal mortality ratio 2010	Adolescent fertility rate (age 15–19) 2012	Adult literacy (age 15+) 2005–2010 M / F	Gross national income per capita, \$ 2012	Human dev't index regional rank 2012
PRC	.213	37	9.1	97 / 91	7,945	2
Thailand	.360	48	37.0	96 / 92	7,722	3
Sri Lanka	.402	35	22.1	93 / 90	5,179	1
Myanmar	.437	200	12.0	95 / 90	1,817	8
Bhutan	.464	180	44.9	65 / 39	5,246	5
Nepal	.485	170	86.2	73 / 48	1,137	9
Bangladesh	.518	240	68.2	61 / 52	1,785	6
Pakistan	.567	260	28.1	69 / 40	2,566	6
India	.610	200	74.7	75 / 51	3,285	4

PRC = People's Republic of China, M = male, F = female, \$ = US dollars in constant 2005 value.

Gender inequality index: composite measure reflecting inequality in achievements between women and men in three dimensions: reproductive health, empowerment, and the labor market. The lowest value is the least unequal.

Maternal mortality ratio: number of maternal deaths per 100,000 live births.

Adolescent fertility rate: number of births to women aged 15–19 per 1,000 women aged 15–19.

Human development index: regional ranking rather than index value presented for ease of comparison.

Source: For all indicators except literacy: United Nations Development Programme. *Human Development Report, 2013*. New York. For literacy: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. *Education for All Monitoring Report 2013, Statistical Tables*. Paris.

in recent decades in increasing access to education and achieving gender parity in basic education. However, there are many Bhutanese—particularly women—who reached adulthood before these opportunities were widely available. For these individuals, lack of literacy limits their economic options and disqualifies them as candidates in local and national elections.

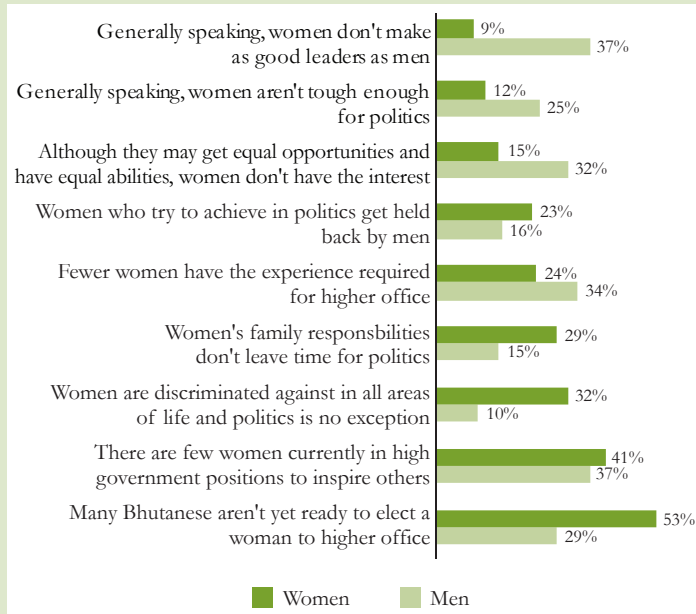
► ***Many people believe that Bhutan has no significant gender equality issues, but this view may reflect gender stereotypes and norms more than evidence***

A view often expressed is that the gender equality situation is relatively favorable in Bhutan and that there is no overt discrimination. At the same time, there are distinct gender stereotypes that are influential even if unrecognized. As noted in a 2008 study by NCWC:

¹¹ Data from the Human Development Report online database, computed to be comparable internationally <http://hdrstats.undp.org/en/indicators> An analysis based on the 2010 Bhutan Multiple Indicator Survey estimates the ratio as 146 in 2006–2010. UNICEF Bhutan. 2013. Health, Nutrition, Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene. *Thematic Analysis Series, Bhutan Multiple Indicator Survey 2010*. Thimphu. p. 9.

¹² National Commission for Women and Children and World Bank (South Asia Region). Forthcoming. *Bhutan Gender Policy Note*.

Box 2. University students, particularly young men, seem to doubt women's capacity and interest in top public and political positions



Percentage of female respondents vs. percentage of male respondents who believe each statement is a major reason why few women are in top public office or political positions

Source: T. Tshomo, T. Angmo, and S. Patel. 2010. *The Gender Divide in Bhutan: Opinions on the status of women split along gender lines among college students*. Research paper by members of Sherubtse College, Royal University of Bhutan.

The unequal status of women and their lack of equal opportunities are often taken for granted and are considered normal. The gender inequalities deeply rooted in families, communities, and individual minds remain largely invisible and underestimated.¹³

A survey done as part of the study found that 44% of survey respondents believed that Bhutanese culture considers women inferior to men. In related focus group discussions, participants identified a number of well-known proverbs that reflect ideas about men being superior in either characteristics or in their position in society.¹⁴

Proverbs are but one of the many ways in which such ideas are continually renewed and reinforced. Family habits, the behavior of community leaders, interpretations of religious beliefs, institutional practices,

popular images, and advertisements are among the many other ways in which messages about gender roles are absorbed by young and old, women and men. Gender-related social norms and practices influence the expectations and behavior of both women and men.

► *Young men and women have different views about the existence of discrimination and about women's potential for leadership*

A 2010 study that focused on attitudes of students at Sherubtse College is of particular interest because the college is Bhutan's leading tertiary education institute and the major source of the new generation of leaders and decision makers in the public and private sectors.¹⁵

The study found that young men and women had sharply different views on whether discrimination against women was a problem in Bhutan. Asked about the seriousness of discrimination against women, 48% of women but only 29% of men thought it was very serious or somewhat serious. Reflecting these views, 62% of women but only 28% of men thought the country needed to continue to make changes to give women equal rights with men.

Regarding the capacities of women or men for leadership, male respondents tended to think that men made the best leaders (58%) while female respondents were much more likely to believe capacities were equal (78%). When asked who was better at particular performance skills or policy questions, males tended to rate men more highly in every area addressed. Box 2 compares male and female views on the reason why so few women are in high public office or in political positions. Responses were similar to a question on reasons for the underrepresentation of women in top business and administrative positions. In both cases, men tended to attribute the underrepresentation of women to women's lack of toughness, leadership qualities, and drive—which (implicitly) men had in greater measure. Women were

¹³ NCWC. 2008. *Study of Gender Stereotypes and Women's Political Participation (Women in Governance)*. p. 5.

¹⁴ *Study of Gender Stereotypes* (footnote 13), p. 35.

¹⁵ T. Tshomo, T. Angmo, and S. Patel. 2010. *The Gender Divide in Bhutan: Opinions on the Status of Women Split along Gender Lines among College Students*. Research paper by members of Sherubtse College, Royal University of Bhutan.

more likely to highlight societal factors and discrimination.

► ***Examining assumptions is a key component of gender analysis and gender mainstreaming***

Assumptions about gender relations may be so well embedded in policy approaches and data instruments that they can be difficult to recognize. However, identifying and examining such assumptions is a critical step in undertaking a sound analysis.

For example, the household is used as a major unit of data collection in surveys such as the Bhutan Living Standards Survey. Households are important social entities, and data by household makes sense when inquiring about household amenities and housing characteristics. However, using the household as the unit of data and analysis for inquiries about sources of income, asset ownership, and community participation is more problematic because it reflects an assumption that the welfare of the household is equally shared by all members. However, there is considerable evidence that there are gender biases in welfare within households and that these can be exacerbated by treating the household as a single entity. The International Food Policy Research Institute has been particularly prominent in research in this area. It has provided evidence that attention to the division of labor and allocation of resources within households is important to achieving aims related to food security and agricultural development, as well as gender equality.¹⁶

Assumptions about the impact of inheritance patterns on women in Bhutan also seem to need further examination. A claim made in many documents is that the relatively equal status of women in Bhutan is largely based on inheritance patterns that favored women. This statement is often accompanied by information that suggests the opposite—that daughters were not inheriting economic assets, but rather a set of management responsibilities on behalf of the family, including the well-being of elderly parents. One government study noted that these

inheritance patterns had the effect of limiting women's socioeconomic choices.¹⁷ Another report notes that inheritance practices have in the past bound women to the land, with the result that they missed out on education.¹⁸ These observations suggest that assumptions about women's inheritance of family property providing a foundation for equality need to be questioned and verified with data and deeper analysis.

► ***Gender gaps evident in educational outcomes and unemployment***

Bhutan has made remarkable progress in increasing access to education. As noted earlier, almost all children aged 6–16 years are in school and gender parity in enrollment has been achieved in basic education (preprimary to class X).¹⁹

However, the poor performance of girls in the last 2 years of basic education, particularly in math and science, reduces their chances of qualifying for publicly funded higher secondary (classes XI–XII). Of students continuing to higher secondary, 66% of boys but only 60% of girls benefit from public funding. Participation by girls drops again between the end of secondary and the beginning of tertiary education.

A number of analyses consider household and community factors that affect girls' participation and performance, including housework responsibilities and the incidence of early pregnancy.²⁰ Strategies to improve educational outcomes for girls could also consider the school environment, including teacher attitudes and classroom management, and the extent to which efforts are made to encourage and support girls and to ensure that there is a positive learning environment for them. A further issue is the extent to which school curricula and teaching practices promote positive views on the capacities of women and girls and their role in society.

¹⁶ A. Quisumbing and B. McClafferty. 2006. *Using Gender Research in Development*. Washington, DC: International Food Policy Research Institute.

¹⁷ Ministry of Economic Affairs. 2008. *Gender Assessment of Ministry of Economic Affairs*. p. 6.

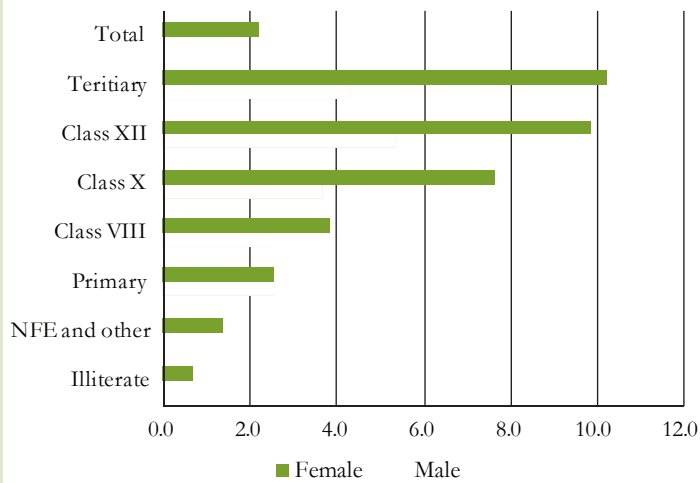
¹⁸ Tarayana Foundation. 2009. *Alternative Report for Bhutan*. For the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, 44th Session. p. 2.

¹⁹ Further details and data sources can be found in the chapter on education.

²⁰ Gender Policy Note (footnote 12).

Box 3. Unemployment rates are higher for women at all levels of education

Unemployment rates by sex and level of completed education, age 15+, 2012



NFE = nonformal education.

Source: Ministry of Labour and Human Resources. *Labour Force Survey Report, 2012*. Calculated from tables 4.1, 4.2, and 17.1.

High unemployment rates for women graduates are also of concern. Unemployment rates are higher for women than men at all levels of education (Box 3). They are highest for women with some tertiary education (some undergraduate study, bachelor's or master's degree, or some form of certificate or diploma). The gap between male and female unemployment rates is also greatest for those with tertiary education.

Unemployment rates have been higher among women than men for more than a decade.²¹ The discrepancy is particularly marked in urban areas, where the female unemployment rate has been more than double the male rate since 2009 (Box 4).²² These consistent patterns suggest that women face discrimination in the labor market and that more attention is needed to promoting equal opportunities in employment.

► *The much slower movement of women than men out of agriculture reflects constraints faced by women*

Agriculture continues to be the mainstay for many Bhutanese, particularly women. Box 5 illustrates the extent to which women predominate in agricultural work and men in nonagricultural employment.

While work in agriculture is critical for family livelihoods and for the nation's food supply, agriculture is also a sector in which productivity and earnings are low. It is because of such characteristics that one of the gender equality indicators for the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) is women's share of wage employment in the nonagriculture sector. This indicator tracks the extent to which women have been able to move into employment that provides higher returns on their labor.²³

Box 4. Unemployment rates are consistently higher among women in urban areas (%)

	Urban		Rural		Total	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
2012	2.0	5.6	1.9	1.2	1.9	2.2
2011	2.7	10.0	1.5	2.7	1.8	4.5
2010	2.9	7.8	2.6	2.5	2.7	4.0
2009	4.2	11.6	2.1	3.8	2.6	5.3

Source: Ministry of Labour and Human Resources. *Labour Force Surveys 2009–2012*.

Box 5. Most of the labor force is still in agriculture, but the agriculture–nonagriculture split differs by sex



Source: Ministry of Labour and Human Resources. *Labour Force Survey Report, 2012*. Table 3.3 (p. 38).

²¹ Ministry of Labour and Human Resources. *Labour Market Information Bulletin 2011*. Table 3.1 for data 1998–2011.

²² Comparable data for previous years are not available.

²³ For further discussion of this MDG target, see United Nations Development Group. 2010. *Thematic Paper on MDG 3: Promote Gender Equality and Empower Women*.

► ***Women farmers face additional challenges in increasing agricultural productivity and earnings***

Tackling low productivity and earnings in agriculture and farming has been identified as important to reducing poverty and reducing rural–urban disparities. The data showing the extent to which women predominate in the agricultural labor force underscore the importance of reaching women farmers with information and services if progress is to be made in increasing agricultural productivity.²⁴

There is very limited sex-disaggregated data on agricultural work, outputs, or earnings. Information on women’s access to productive resources, training, and extension services is also scarce, as is information on participation in farmers groups and cooperatives.

However, in a consultation for this report, local government officials emphasized the competing demands of child care and household responsibilities as a particular constraint to women’s capacity to increase agricultural productivity and earnings. Other factors identified as affecting women more or differently than men included access to fragmented land holdings with limited labor time, lack of machinery to reduce heavy labor, and limited means to counteract crop destruction by wildlife. It was also noted that because of cultural attitudes prevalent in families and among service providers, women’s capacities were underestimated, and this limited their participation in training and follow-up support provided to support implementation of lessons from training.²⁵

► ***Women’s workloads are heavier than those of men***

When family and community responsibilities are considered together with agriculture and other economic activities, the working day for women is long, particularly for rural women, and longer than that of men.

The time use data collected in 2010 for the GNH index show that women worked almost

an hour more per day than men. Women were therefore considered overworked and time deprived by the study, which focused on well-being. Work hours included various forms of unpaid work, such as child care, labor contributions to community works, household maintenance, care of the sick, crop farming, and kitchen gardening.²⁶

Access to electricity has lightened elements of the household work generally done by women. For example, one study found that the use of electricity for cooking saved women 1.5 hours per day.²⁷ However, other household tasks that are essential to the well-being of household members—such as cooking; laundry; maintaining household hygiene; and care of the young, the elderly, and those who are ill—all take time and energy.

And, despite the progress in household access to electricity, fuelwood is still used by most rural households for cooking and heating. Studies have shown that most of the fuelwood collection is done by women and that it is time-consuming, adding up to about one person-month per year.²⁸ An idea of the nature of the burden is provided by the 2012 Bhutan Living Standards Survey, which found that about 90% of rural households reported the amount of fuelwood used by the number of backloads carried per month. Almost half of the households used as many as 20 backloads per month.²⁹

In addition, there are also community labor requirements. In the absence of road access, most of the unpaid labor to transport construction materials for schools, health units, and other infrastructure seems to be supplied by women. One assessment noted that road connections to rural communities “brought great relief to women from carrying loads for developmental works.”³⁰ But farm

²⁴ In 2012, 112,340 women and 73,131 men were employed in rural agriculture or farming enterprises. Ministry of Labour and Human Resources. 2012. *Labour Force Survey Report, 2012*. Table 3.1 (p. 37).

²⁵ Consultation workshops in two *Dzongkhags*, Sarpang and Samdrup Jongkhar, October 2013.

²⁶ K. Ura et al. 2012. *An Extensive Analysis of the GNH Index*. Thimphu: Centre for Bhutan Studies. pp. 150–154.

²⁷ ADB. 2010. *Asian Development Bank’s Assistance for Rural Electrification in Bhutan—Does Electrification Improve Quality of Rural Life?* Manila (Impact Evaluation Study: BHU 2010-27). p. 19.

²⁸ Ministry of Economic Affairs. 2010. *Integrated Energy Management Master Plan for Bhutan*. p.7.

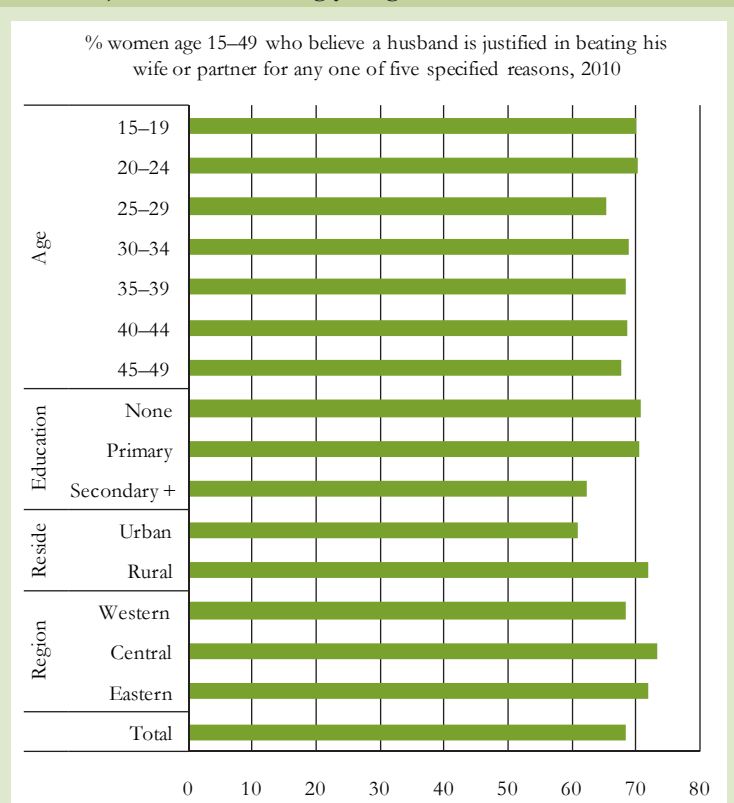
²⁹ BLSS 2012 (footnote 6), Table 7.10 on fuelwood use, and Table A3.73 on backloads.

³⁰ Nordic Consulting Group A/S. 2012. *Technical Study on Environmental and Social Impacts of Investments Made by Local Governments in Bhutan (with a particular focus*

Box 6. Domestic violence occurs in both rural and urban areas, and across levels of education and wealth

		Percentage of ever married women age 15–49 years who have ever experienced domestic violence from husband or partner, by type of violence, 2010			
		Emotional violence	Physical violence	Sexual violence	Emotional, physical, or sexual violence
Area	Urban	14.9	13.0	5.8	20.1
	Rural	19.1	14.5	7.7	25.7
Education	None	18.9	15.1	7.6	25.5
	Primary	18.8	16.5	7.5	26.0
	Secondary +	13.1	8.1	5.1	16.7
Wealth index quintiles	Poorest	22.2	17.1	9.2	29.3
	Second	20.2	15.4	9.1	26.8
	Middle	17.8	13.4	6.4	24.1
	Fourth	17.3	14.8	6.7	24.0
	Richest	12.2	9.8	4.4	16.5
Married or in union	Currently	16.7	12.8	6.7	22.7
	Formerly	31.1	28.9	12.3	39.8
Total		17.9	14.1	7.1	24.1

Source: UNICEF Bhutan. Forthcoming. Child Protection. *Thematic Analysis Series, Bhutan Multiple Indicator Survey 2010*. Thimphu. Table 39.

Box 7. A disturbing proportion of women think domestic violence is justifiable, including young and educated women


Source: National Statistics Bureau. *Bhutan Multiple Indicator Survey, 2010*. Table CP.7.

roads have introduced other demands, as women seem to carry a disproportionate share of the “voluntary” and unpaid labor required for routine maintenance of farm roads. From one perspective, women are more likely to be unpaid family workers and thus more “available” than men doing waged work. However, this view ignores women’s heavy workloads and the overlap between the peak demand for road maintenance work and the peak season for agricultural work, both of which follow the monsoon.³¹

► ***The high incidence and tolerance of domestic violence suggests that it is not sufficiently challenged***

The 2010 Bhutan Multiple Indicator Survey resulted in some disturbing findings about women’s experience and tolerance of domestic violence.

Among women aged 15–49 years who were currently or formerly married, 24% had experienced emotional, physical, or sexual violence by their husbands or partners. The data in Box 6 shows that the proportion is somewhat less in urban than rural areas, and that it diminishes somewhat at higher education levels and in the wealthiest quintile. However, the most striking finding is that domestic violence is high in all social groups. A further consideration of the evidence showed that violence was generally not an isolated event—fully 88% of women who had experienced any form of domestic violence also stated that they had experienced some form of domestic violence often or sometimes in the previous year.³²

An even more disturbing finding was the extent to which domestic violence was condoned by women, including younger women, educated women, and women in all regions (Box 7). Among all women aged 15–49 years, 68% believe that a man is justified in beating his wife or partner for any of the

on farm road investments). Study commissioned by the Sustainable Environment Support Programme, Gross National Happiness Commission, and the Representation Office of Denmark in Bhutan. pp. 19, drawing on an evaluation of a major World Bank rural roads project.

³¹ Technical Study (footnote 30, pp. 18, 27, 37.

³² UNICEF Bhutan. Forthcoming. Child Protection. *Thematic Analysis Series, Bhutan Multiple Indicator Survey 2010*. Thimphu. Table 42 and related text.

following reasons: neglect of children, going out without telling him, arguing with him, refusing sex, and burning food. Surprisingly, levels of tolerance are slightly higher among younger than older women, and remain high among women with a secondary education.³³

This level of tolerance of domestic violence suggests a lack of exposure to contrary views from other women or from men, educational institutions, and political leaders. It also suggests that there is not yet a widespread understanding of the link between women's personal security and dignity and the principles of gross national happiness.

The opposition by many legislators to the domestic violence protection bill when it was first debated in the National Assembly in 2012 was also revealing about attitudes about family and gender relations. Vigorous efforts by the few female legislators as well as a public outcry and a social media campaign secured the passage of the bill.³⁴

► **Women are poorly represented in decision-making positions in Parliament and the civil service**

Few women became members of Parliament in the first round of national democratic elections in 2008. Some of the contributing factors could include the small number of women who stood as candidates, the high minimum qualifications (a university degree, which tends to exclude more women than men), and the small pool of women in the senior public service that provided the major talent pool for electoral candidates. A second national Parliament was elected in 2013, and these elections resulted in even fewer elected women. Women accounted for only 3 of the 47 members elected to the National Assembly in 2013, compared with 4 in 2008; and no women were elected to the National Council in 2013, compared with three in the 2008 (Box 8).

However, the new Parliament registered a first with the appointment of the first woman as a member of the cabinet—Aum Dorji Choden,

Box 8. Women's representation in Parliament was lower after the 2013 elections than after the first round in 2008

	Men	Women	Total	% women
2008 Parliament				
National Council				
Elected (20)	17	3	20	15.0%
Nominated (5)	2	3	5	60.0%
National Assembly				
Elected (47)	43	4	47	8.5%
2013 Parliament				
National Council				
Candidates	62	5	67	7.5%
Elected (20)	20	0	20	0.0%
Nominated (5)	2	3	5	60.0%
National Assembly				
Candidates (2nd round)	85	9	94	10.6%
Elected (47)	44	3	47	6.4%

Sources: Data for 2008 from the Inter-Parliamentary Union database on national parliaments: www.ipu.org/parline-e/parlinesearch.asp; data for 2013 from the National Commission for Women and Children.

minister of works and human settlement.³⁵

The local government elections in 2011 also resulted in disappointingly few women running for office and succeeding as candidates. Contributing factors at this level could include a lack of functional literacy skills (the educational requirement for local office), the widespread view that politics is a male activity, and lack of confidence among women in taking a public role.³⁶ Another factor could be that success in local elections brings heavy responsibilities and limited remuneration. Given women's already heavy workloads, another such job might not be an attractive option. (Low remuneration may also account for the number of elected positions for which there were no candidates, male or female.)

Women are also not well represented in the civil service, particularly at the upper levels with the most influence on decisions about policy. In 2012, women accounted for 36% of all civil servants and 6% of civil servants

³³ National Statistics Bureau. *Bhutan Multiple Indicator Survey 2010*, p. 176 on women's attitudes (men's views were not reported). See Child Protection study (footnote 32), section 6.2, for a more detailed discussion of attitudes of adolescent girls.

³⁴ T. Wangmo. 2013. The Law of Contention—Bhutan and the Domestic Violence Bill. *The Raven*, 6 March.

³⁵ *Bhutan Observer*. 2013. New cabinet is in place. 25 July. <http://bhutanobserver.bt>

³⁶ NCWC and UN Women. 2012. *Women's Political Participation in 2011 Local Government Elections*. Also see data and further discussion in chapter on urban development.

in the executive category.³⁷ There is only one woman among the 20 *Dzongdags* (district administrators), and very few judges are women.³⁸ Women are also underrepresented among government officers with field postings to manage regulatory affairs, advise local governments, deliver extension services, or teach in the schools. This means that few women are in the decision and information feedback loops about local needs and the suitability of programs.

These observations suggest that the public—including adults and the upcoming generations—have limited exposure to women in modern leadership roles. An interesting perspective on this issue is provided by a study in India that showed how views on women's capacity for leadership became more positive once communities had experience with women in public office (which became widespread in India with a quota system for women in local government).³⁹ A challenge in Bhutan will be to reach a level of representation by women that can shift public expectations.

► ***Gross national happiness assessments have found that women are less happy than men***

A GNH index has been developed by the Centre for Bhutan Studies to assess the well-being of the population and support policy development. The GNH index is a multidimensional measure covering nine domains that include elements such as time use, life satisfaction, literacy and education, political participation, social support, and living standards. Assessments using the index consider the proportion of respondents that have achieved a “sufficiency” on each indicator as well as well-being above that.⁴⁰

The 2010 GNH survey found that 49% of men but only 33% of women had reached sufficiency or happiness on the combined index. This is a wide gap and is reportedly

statistically significant.⁴¹ The indicators with the largest gap between women and men related to literacy, schooling, working hours, political participation, and community donations of time and money.⁴²

Policy Environment for Progress toward Gender Equality

► ***The major sources of state policy promote attention to equality***

The major sources of state policy promote attention to equality of citizenship rights and enjoyment of life by all citizens, women and men (Box 9).

The Constitution of the Kingdom of Bhutan makes a strong statement on the equal rights of all citizens, regardless of sex, and the Principles of State Policy include a commitment to the creation of a state free of discrimination, and to take measures to eliminate discrimination against and exploitation of women.

Bhutan 2020: A Vision for Peace, Prosperity and Happiness outlines a vision of development based on the GNH concept that emphasizes the ability of all to realize their potential; equitable sharing of the benefits of development; and opportunities for all to share in decisions that affect their lives, livelihoods, and families. This vision cannot be attained without ensuring that women have equitable access to self-realization, development benefits, and participation in decision making.

► ***A National Plan of Action for Gender accompanied the Tenth Five-Year Plan***

The National Plan of Action for Gender (NPAG) was designed to complement the Tenth Five-Year Plan.⁴³ The formulation of the NPAG was led by the GNH Commission and the National Commission for Women and Children (NCWC), in consultation with government gender focal points and other stakeholders. The NPAG identified seven critical areas for action and provided

³⁷ Royal Civil Service Commission. *Civil Service Statistics December 2012*. pp. 1, 25.

³⁸ Women's political participation (footnote 36), p. 9.

The first woman *Dzongdag* was appointed in 2012.

³⁹ Poverty Action Lab. 2012. Raising female leaders. *J-PL Policy Briefcase*. Links to this brief and to the full research article at www.povertyactionlab.org/evaluation/perceptions-female-leaders-india

⁴⁰ K. Ura et al. 2012. *A Short Guide to Gross National Happiness Index. Also An Extensive Analysis of GNH Index*. Thimphu: Centre for Bhutan Studies.

⁴¹ Short Guide (footnote 40), p. 58; Extensive Analysis (footnote 40), p. 59.

⁴² Short Guide (footnote 40), Figure 13, p. 58.

⁴³ GNH Commission and NCWC. 2008. *National Plan of Action for Gender, 2008–2013*.

a background analysis and a results-based action plan for each one:

- good governance;
- employment;
- education and training;
- health;
- aging, mental health, and disabilities;
- violence against women; and
- prejudices and stereotypes.

The NPAG covered 2008–2013 (the same time frame as the Tenth Five-Year Plan). During that period, violence against women was the area of action that received the most attention and follow-up. This included the enactment of the Domestic Violence Prevention Act, 2013.

For most other areas, follow-up was hampered by a lapse in timing so that the 10th plan was finalized before the initiatives identified in the NPAG could be incorporated. Rather than updating the NPAG as a parallel document to the 11th plan, NCWC collaborated with the gender focal point network to select and prioritize the remaining NPAG-identified actions for inclusion in NCWC strategic plan.⁴⁴ In this way, attention to a focused set of issues by NCWC will complement the emphasis on mainstreaming throughout other sectors, as mandated by the GNH Commission as the approach for the 11th plan.⁴⁵

► ***The Eleventh Five-Year Plan targets a more gender friendly environment for women's participation***

Five-year plans are key policy instruments that provide consolidated statements of government priorities and strategies. A major theme of the 11th plan, adopted in mid-2013, is inclusive development. The plan situates the promotion of gender equality as a key element of strengthening governance.⁴⁶ It sets out four areas for attention and commits to preparing legislation on quotas for women's representation in local and national elected bodies, and to the implementation of gender

Box 9. Major sources of state policy promote attention to equality of citizenship rights and enjoyment of life by all citizens

Constitution of the Kingdom of Bhutan

Fundamental rights (Article 7):

15. All persons are equal before the law and are entitled to equal and effective protection of the law and shall not be discriminated against on the grounds of race, sex, language, religion, politics or other status.

Fundamental duties (Article 8):

5. A person shall not tolerate or participate in acts of injury, torture or killing of another person, terrorism, abuse of women, children or any other person and shall take necessary steps to prevent such acts.

Principles of State Policy (Article 9):

3. The State shall endeavour to create a civil society free of oppression, discrimination and violence, based on the rule of law, protection of human rights and dignity, and to ensure the fundamental rights and freedoms of the people.
17. The State shall endeavour to take appropriate measures to eliminate all forms of discrimination and exploitation against women including trafficking, prostitution, abuse, violence, harassment and intimidation at work in both public and private spheres.

Bhutan 2020: A Vision for Peace, Prosperity and Happiness

The main development objectives include three that are particularly relevant:

- Human development: To maximize the happiness of all Bhutanese and to enable them to achieve their full and innate potential as human beings.
- Balanced and equitable development: To ensure that the benefits of development are shared equitably between different income groups and regions and in ways that promote social harmony, stability and unity and contribute to the development of a just and compassionate society.
- Governance: To further develop our institutions, human resources and system of governance in ways that enable us to ... enlarge opportunities for people at all levels to participate more fully and effectively in decisions that have a bearing on their lives and livelihoods and the future of their families, communities and the nation.

Sources: *Constitution of the Kingdom of Bhutan*. 2008; and Planning Commission. 1999. *Bhutan 2020: A Vision for Peace, Prosperity and Happiness*. Part 2, pp. 12–15.

mainstreaming strategies by government agencies (Box 10).

► ***Additional tools have been adopted in support of gender mainstreaming***

The 2012 Protocol for Policy Formulation issues by the GNH Commission directs all policy proponents to mainstream gender issues in policy preparation. Compliance is monitored through two documents to be submitted along with all policy concept notes: (i) the GNH Policy Screening Tool

⁴⁴ Discussions with NCWC, January 2013.

⁴⁵ GNH Commission. 2012. *Guidelines for Preparation of the Eleventh Plan (2013–2018)*. p. 21.

⁴⁶ Gross National Happiness Commission. 2013. *Eleventh Five-Year Plan, 2013–2018*. pp. 121, 244.

Box 10. The Eleventh Five-Year Plan targets a more gender friendly environment for women's participation

Under the governance pillar of the gross national happiness framework, four performance indicators related to the environment for women's participation are specified:

- (i) *Draft legislation to ensure quota for women in elected offices including the Parliament and local government bodies*—draft legislation and present to the Parliament.
- (ii) *Ratio of females to males in tertiary education*—ensure at least 90% female to male ratio in tertiary education.
- (iii) *Female youth unemployment*—reduce female unemployment from 7.2% to less than 5%.
- (iv) *Agencies with gender sensitive policies and/or gender mainstreaming strategies*—at least 20 agencies implementing gender sensitive policies and/or gender mainstreaming strategies.

Gross National Happiness Commission. 2013. *Eleventh Five-Year Plan, 2013–2018*. pp. 76–77.

(which includes gender impacts as one of the variables to be scored under the governance theme), and (ii) a policy protocol report (which outlines four points to be addressed in the gender analysis of policy alternatives and their implications).

A strategy to implement a gender-responsive planning and budgeting approach is also being explored as a means of strengthening policy and program development. An initial focus is to ensure that the gender-specific initiatives identified by various departments and agencies in the 11th plan are funded, together with the prioritized remaining measures from the NPAG.⁴⁷

Another tool under development is the Gender Monitoring System, an online system in which departments and agencies report on progress toward the results and changes identified as a result of gender mainstreaming approaches in the 11th plan.

Institutional Structures to Promote Action on Gender Equality Issues

► *The responsibility of all ministries and agencies to address gender equality had been recognized*

The 11th plan commitment to increasing the number of agencies with gender sensitive policies and/or gender mainstreaming

strategies (Box 10) reflects the recognition that all ministries and agencies have a responsibility to address gender equality issues.

The GNH Commission has had an important role in stimulating and coordinating action on gender equality issues since 2000, when it put in motion the first study of gender issues in the country: *Gender Pilot Study: Bhutan*.⁴⁸ In 2001 the GNH Commission brought together gender focal points from all sectors to form a gender theme group to facilitate a multisector approach to gender equality issues. This 21-member group prepared the first report on Bhutan's compliance with the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, which was submitted to the United Nations for review in 2002.⁴⁹

► *The National Commission of Women and Children has a strategic policy and advisory role in support of gender equality*

In establishing NCWC in 2004, the government recognized the need for an organization to stimulate and support the implementation of Bhutan's aims and obligations toward women's equality (and the protection of children).

NCWC commissioners include individuals from both the senior civil service and nongovernment sectors; they meet twice per year under the leadership of a cabinet minister. Operational activities are undertaken by a small secretariat headed by a director general. The Women's Division is responsible for initiatives related to women's equality and gender mainstreaming (issues related to children are addressed separately by the Children's Division).⁵⁰

⁴⁸ The study was undertaken in collaboration with the National Statistics Bureau and United Nations agencies. (At that time the GNH Commission was called the Planning Commission, and the National Statistics Bureau was the Central Statistical Office.)

⁴⁹ The process for preparing this report is discussed in NPAG (footnote 43), p. 13. This first report enabled Bhutan to catch up to its sixth reporting cycle. A subsequent report in 2006 was for the next reporting cycle and is therefore called the seventh periodic report.

⁵⁰ See NCWC website: www.ncwc.org.bt

⁴⁷ Discussions with NCWC, October 2013.

► ***The network of gender focal points is a key mechanism for increasing attention to gender equality issues***

In 2005, NCWC in collaboration with the GNH Commission revitalized the gender focal point network, first clarifying the focal points' responsibilities within their own agencies, then giving them more visibility and providing them with opportunities for training and cross-sector learning.⁵¹ The gender focal point network now includes representation from all ministries, as well as from government and autonomous agencies, academia, nongovernment organizations, the armed forces, the business community, and the National Assembly. It has evolved into a productive network with informed and committed individuals in many sectors, and was particularly important in efforts to mainstream a gender perspective into the development of the 11th plan.

At the same time, concerns remain about the ability of gender focal points to meet the expectations placed on them, given the competing demands of other responsibilities and gaps in skills and knowledge. In collaboration with development partners,

NCWC is addressing the challenge of supporting the gender focal points and providing further opportunities to develop skills and strategies.

► ***Local governments also have an important role in addressing gender equality issues***

Under the decentralization process that has been under way for some time in Bhutan, local governments are important players in managing local development and providing a range of services to the population. As part of preparing five-year plans, local governments were asked to mainstream gender (as well as environment, disaster risk reduction, climate change, and poverty).

In a consultation with local government officials for this report, participants called for more advocacy and awareness activities at the local level on gender equality issues and strategies, and for support to increase their capacity. They also called for a stronger link between the local and national levels on gender equality to facilitate greater exposure and support. NCWC has prioritized follow-up in all these areas during the 11th plan period.

⁵¹ NPAG (footnote 43), p. 13.

Toward Gender-Equitable Opportunities and Outcomes:

Agriculture and Rural Livelihoods

Summary	
Sector context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> About 70% of the population is rural, and most rural households depend at least in part on crop, livestock, and forest products for subsistence and income. Agriculture sector challenges include low productivity, low technology, inaccessible markets, and labor shortages. The Eleventh Five-Year Plan continues efforts of the Tenth Five-Year Plan to shift from subsistence to commercial production.
Gender equality issues relevant to sector activities and outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Available data provide little insight into the functioning of rural households, particularly from a gender perspective. Women predominate in the rural and agricultural labor force. With the addition of household and community requirements, the work burdens of rural women are particularly heavy. The common assumption that inheritance practices benefit women needs validation. Limited information is available about women's access to other productive resources (labor, extension, and finance). Cooperatives, farmers' groups, and other self-help groups provide means to increase women's options. Domestic violence is prevalent in rural areas and affects women's economic activities as well as their quality of life.
Government commitments to support women or gender equality in the sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Efforts to bring extension services closer to local communities have benefited both women and men. The National Plan of Action for Gender aims to increase the number of women extension workers and the participation of women farmers in training.
Looking forward: issues and opportunities to consider	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data for informed policy development—beyond the household Women's views on development priorities and strategies Labor-saving technologies to reduce women's work burden Collective or commercial approaches to certain household tasks Mobile phones as an economic asset for women farmers Domestic violence prevention
Appendixes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tip Sheet on Integrating Gender Perspectives in the Sector Useful Resources for Gender Analysis in the Sector

Sector Context

About 70% of Bhutan's population is rural and most rural households depend at least in part on crop, livestock, and forest products for subsistence and income. Agriculture, livestock, and forestry are therefore key policy areas; they are commonly referred to collectively as the renewable natural resources (RNR) sector.

Despite its importance to such a large proportion of the population, the RNR sector accounted for only 18% of overall gross domestic product in 2011, and the rate of growth is slower than in other sectors.¹ Low agricultural yields and productivity have been attributed to a range of factors including the difficult mountain terrain, limited arable land, low technology adoption, poor irrigation, the small size of domestic markets, difficult market access, and high transaction costs. Labor shortages linked to rural–urban migration, and difficulties in protecting crops and animals from wildlife predation, are further constraints.²

Landholdings are small—the most recent census of households involved in RNR production found that, in 2008, 20% of such households owned less than 1 acre, 34% owned 1–3 acres, 39% owned 3–10 acres, and only 7% owned more than 10 acres. On average, households owned 4 acres, but holdings tended to be fragmented into small parcels in different locations.³ Most households used bullocks to cultivate the land (88%), although a few used power tillers (8%).⁴ About 61% of the agricultural land was in cereal crops, mostly paddy and maize. Horticultural crops included vegetables, pulses, spices, oilseeds, and fruit.

Box 1. Incomes of rural households are derived from multiple sources

Percentage of all households involved in production related to nonrenewable natural resources that have cash income from these sources, 2008

Horticultural crops	59.4%
Cereal crops	20.0%
Livestock products	33.6%
Nonwood forest products	5.6%
Transport services (animal, motor)	8.1%
Off-farm activities	72.8%
Remittances	20.6%

Nonwood forest products include nuts, oilseeds, medicinal plants, and items made of forest products such as baskets, dyes, and furniture.

Source: Ministry of Agriculture and Forests. 2010. *Nonrenewable Natural Resources Census 2009*. Vol. 1. p. 19.

Livestock (including cattle, horses, sheep, and poultry) and related products (dairy, meat, wool, and eggs) are another critical element of the rural economy.⁵ Forests support subsistence and farming by providing foods, energy, animal fodder, and organic fertilizer.⁶

Households use much of their own output for subsistence, particularly cereal grains. However, better road access has increased opportunities to gain cash income from sales. Household cash incomes are usually generated from multiple activities and sources, as illustrated by the figures in Box 1. Notably, 73% of households involved in RNR production have income from off-farm sources (e.g., wages, income from cottage industries and small enterprises, or pensions) and 21% receive remittances.

The RNR census found that rural households produced sufficient food grains to meet 85% of their annual requirements, but 55% faced seasonal shortages of 3.5 months on average. These shortages were overcome with income derived from the sale of horticultural crops, livestock products, forest products, or off-farm activities.⁷ The importance of being able to complement own-use production with other sources of income was highlighted by a study that found a strong link between access to markets and food security—caloric

¹ Royal Monetary Authority. 2013. *Annual Report 2011–2012*. Section 1, Table 1.1, Charts 1.3, 1.4.

² Gross National Happiness Commission. 2011. *Eleventh Round Table Meeting, Turning Vision into Reality: the Development Challenges Confronting Bhutan*. pp. 52–53; World Bank. 2011. *Bhutan Economic Update*. p. 3.

³ Ministry of Agriculture and Forests. 2010. *RNR Census 2009*. Vol.1. pp. 34–37. Another 1% are landless. Note that these figures are based on households involved in RNR production, so differ from data on holdings and landlessness that are based on household location (rural or urban).

⁴ *RNR Census 2009* (footnote 3), p. 16.

⁵ *RNR Census 2009* (footnote 3), p. 65.

⁶ *RNR Census 2009* (footnote 3), p. 84.

⁷ *RNR Census 2009* (footnote 3), pp. 126–127.

consumption fell and undernourishment went up with greater distance from markets.⁸

The major theme of the Tenth Five-Year Plan was poverty reduction, and the plan aimed to enhance rural livelihoods by increasing agricultural productivity and expanding the commercial prospects for agriculture, including small-scale agriculture. Farmers' groups and cooperatives were identified as means to deliver extension services more effectively and to facilitate farmers' access to markets. Since 2009, farmers' groups have been able to register under and benefit from the legal framework provided by the Cooperatives Act of Bhutan, 2001. The Cottage Small and Medium Industry Policy, 2012 (CSMI Policy) provides a government-wide framework for private sector development. It provides for targeted support to strengthen agricultural value chains and off-farm activities such as weaving, whether through cottage enterprises or cooperatives. Another area of policy development relevant to the sector is the formulation of a financial inclusion policy to increase rural access to financial services.

The Eleventh Five-Year Plan continues the focus on increasing the commercial viability of the RNR sector, with the aim of higher returns to farmers, improved rural livelihoods, reduced imports, and employment attractive to youth.⁹

The Ministry of Agriculture and Forests is the leading national agency for the RNR sector. With decentralization, the ministry collaborates with local governments in planning and managing service delivery. The Department of Agricultural Marketing and Cooperatives provides services in support of the commercialization of agriculture and has a large role in implementing the elements of the CSMI Policy related to agricultural value chains and agribusiness.

(See also chapters on environment and private sector development.)

Gender Equality Issues Relevant to Sector Activities and Outcomes

► *Data available provides little insight into how rural households function*

Most available data about rural living standards and agricultural production is based on the household. The household is clearly an important economic and social unit. However, it is difficult to understand how it functions, particularly from a gender perspective, without further information about the way in which assets, resources, and work are shared or allocated among the male and female members of the household.

One of the very few gender-related household characteristics about which data is provided is the proportion of households headed by women. While households headed by women are often compared with those headed by men, such comparisons are difficult to interpret without further information about the internal composition of these households and the relations among members. For example, do the two types of households have similar numbers of adults to work in the fields or to bring income into the household? How do they compare in the number of dependent children or elderly persons? To what extent is there equal participation in decision-making about household resources and enterprises?

Box 2 shows that there is considerable variation across the country and within regions in the proportion of households headed by women. One consistent pattern is that households headed by women are more common in rural than in urban areas. In addition, among rural households, male heads of household are much more likely to have a spouse than female heads of household—in most *Dzongkhags*, 75% or more of male household heads have a spouse, while there are only a few *Dzongkhags* in which more than 50% of female household heads have a spouse. This suggests that there is a general tendency in households in which a male spouse is present to name him as head of household.

In households where the head has a spouse, both spouses can contribute to farm work, household enterprises, and household wage income. Household heads without spouses

⁸ Eleventh Round Table (footnote 2), p. 54, citing the 2008 Right to Food Assessment.

⁹ Gross National Happiness Commission. 2013. *Eleventh Five-Year Plan, 2013–2018*. Vol. 1. pp. 170–175.

could be single, divorced, or widowed (or have an absent spouse); but in each case they lack the extra spouse as a worker. The *Poverty Assessment Report 2007*, using data from the 2007 Bhutan Living Standards Survey, found that rural households headed by women had fewer members than rural households headed by men and somewhat higher dependency ratios (the ratio of children and elderly to working age household members).¹⁰ It would be interesting to know how the two types of household compared with respect to the sources of income (wages, sale of RNR and other products, and remittances), but this information is not available from the major source of data on household income, the Bhutan Living Standards Survey, which provides only household totals (and seems to omit the value of own production, which is important to household welfare and would also be affected by the number of workers in the household).¹¹

Another major concern about the use of the household as the unit for data and analysis is that it reflects the assumption that the welfare of the household is equally shared by all members. However, there is considerable evidence that there are gender biases in welfare within households and that these can be exacerbated by treating the household as an undifferentiated entity. Research by the International Food Policy Research Institute has provided evidence that attention to the division of labor and resource allocation within households is important to effective approaches to food security and agricultural development as well as gender equality.¹²

► ***There are more women than men in the rural and agricultural labor force***

Data from the 2012 Labour Force Survey confirm a pattern, evident over several years, that rural labor force participation rates are

Box 2. Households headed by women are more common in rural than urban areas, and rural female household heads are much less likely to have a spouse than rural male household heads

Region and <i>Dzongkhag</i>		Percentage of all households that are headed by women (2005)		Percentage of rural households in which household head (HH) has a spouse (2005)	
		Urban	Rural	Male HH	Female HH
All Bhutan		19.7	32.6	78.9	39.7
Western	Chukha	13.4	19.3	70.5	28.0
	Haa	19.5	31.7	80.2	37.9
	Paro	21.8	35.2	78.3	42.7
	Samtse	11.0	16.5	85.0	23.5
	Thimphu	17.4	35.5	62.4	45.9
Central-Western	Dagana	37.7	34.8	83.3	46.7
	Gasa	26.2	43.0	58.9	32.1
	Punakha	27.9	53.6	69.7	55.8
	Tsirang	26.5	21.5	85.3	19.3
	Wangdue	21.8	50.8	69.9	47.8
Central-Eastern	Bumthang	36.1	56.3	58.4	51.4
	Sarpang	28.5	25.4	83.8	23.5
	Trongsa	27.2	55.9	62.8	52.5
	Zhemgang	33.9	39.9	82.7	54.1
	Lhuntse	38.9	50.9	75.8	49.0
Eastern	Mongar	21.4	43.8	79.1	48.0
	Pemagatshel	7.1	29.0	84.9	22.3
	Samdrup Jongkhar	26.0	20.7	85.7	16.6
	Trashigang	28.0	27.6	83.0	29.8
	Trashiyangtse	30.7	39.2	79.0	39.4

Note: Census data is used here because more recent sources do not have as complete a count and do not provide the same level of detail.

Source: National Statistics Bureau. *Population and Housing Census of Bhutan, 2005*. Calculated from Table 3.10.

Box 3. Women predominate in the rural and agricultural labor force

Selected data on rural labor force and rural employment by type of enterprise, 2012	Female	Male
Rural labor force participation rate	69.0%	63.9%
Rural unemployment rate	1.2%	1.9%
Total number of rural persons employed	130,854	110,445
Number employed in agriculture or farming enterprises	112,340	73,131
Number employed in private business	13,127	19,638
Number employed in government	3,436	12,033

Note: Labor force participation and employment include all engaged in economic activity, whether it is paid or not.

Source: Ministry of Labour and Human Resources. *Labour Force Survey Report, 2012*. Table 2.2 (p. 36), Table 3.1 (p. 37).

¹⁰ National Statistics Bureau. 2007. *Poverty Assessment Report, 2007*. p. 23. The 2012 report also found households headed by women to be smaller but did not provide comparable dependency ratios. It should also be noted that both reports show that differences between poor and nonpoor households were much greater than difference by sex of household head.

¹¹ National Statistics Bureau. *Bhutan Living Standards Survey 2012* (BLSS 2012). pp. 62–68.

¹² A. Quisumbing and B. McClafferty. 2006. *Using Gender Research in Development*. Washington, DC: International Food Policy Research Institute.

higher for women than men (for all age groups up to age 60), and that women outnumber men among the employed and particularly among those employed in agriculture (Box 3). In rural areas, agriculture and/or farming enterprises accounted for 85.9% of employed women, but only 66.2% of employed men, as men had a larger share than women of rural employment in private business and government.

Not all of this employment generates income, but unpaid farm work produces cereal crops, vegetables, eggs, cheese, and other outputs that are critical to household welfare and displace expenditures that would otherwise be required.

A recent sector analysis highlighted the role of increased labor force participation, and particularly the increase in women's participation, in maintaining the agricultural labor force despite rural–urban migration.¹³

► ***With the addition of household and community requirements, rural women have heavy workloads***

In addition to women's work in agricultural and other economic activities, they also have family and community responsibilities.

This includes a large part of the task of supplying households with fuelwood, which many rural households continue to use for cooking and heating despite the major progress made in extending electricity to rural communities. The 2012 Bhutan Living Standards Survey found that fuelwood was used for cooking by half of rural households, although some also used electricity. It also found that 31% of households used fuelwood for heating (another 56% had no heating, and 7.5% used electricity).¹⁴ About 90% of rural households reported the amount of fuelwood used by the number of backloads per month, which was as many 20 backloads per month for almost half of those households.¹⁵ Other studies have shown that most of the fuelwood collection is done by women and that it is time-consuming, adding up to about one person-month per year.¹⁶

Access to electricity has lightened other elements of the household work generally done by women. For example, one study found that the use of electricity for cooking saved women 1.5 hours per day.¹⁷ Gaining an electricity connection also prompted some households to upgrade conditions such as flooring, as the better lighting allowed by electricity facilitates maintenance.¹⁸ However, household tasks that are essential to the well-being of household members—such as cooking; laundry; maintaining household hygiene; and care of the young, the elderly, and the ill—all take time and energy.

In addition, there are community labor requirements. With increased road access, women benefited from no longer having to contribute free labor to transport construction materials for schools, health units, and other infrastructure—as noted in one assessment, the roads “brought great relief to women from carrying loads for developmental works.”¹⁹ On the other hand, women seem to carry a disproportionate share of the “voluntary” and unpaid labor required for the routine maintenance of farm roads. From one perspective, women are more likely to be unpaid family workers and thus more “available” than those in waged work. However, this view ignores both the overall workload of women and the increased demands road maintenance places on women in the peak agricultural season, which is also when monsoon damage increases the need for road maintenance.²⁰

The cumulative effect of all such demands is evident in the time use data collected in 2010 for the gross national happiness index. The data show that working hours of rural women were considerably longer than those

Management Master Plan for Bhutan. p.7.

¹⁷ ADB. 2010. *Asian Development Bank's Assistance for Rural Electrification in Bhutan—Does Electrification Improve Quality of Rural Life?* Manila. (Impact Evaluation Study: BHU 2010-27). p. 19.

¹⁸ ADB Evaluation (footnote 17), p. 64.

¹⁹ Nordic Consulting Group A/S. 2012. *Technical Study on Environmental and Social Impacts of Investments Made by Local Governments in Bhutan (with a particular focus on farm road investments)*. Study commissioned by the Sustainable Environment Support Programme, Gross National Happiness Commission, and the Representation Office of Denmark in Bhutan. pp. 19, drawing on an evaluation of a major World Bank rural roads project.

²⁰ Technical Study (footnote 19), pp. 18, 27, 37.

¹³ Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and World Bank. 2012. *Bhutan Agriculture Sector Review. Vol. 1. Issues, Institutions, Policies*. Rome.

¹⁴ BLSS 2012 (footnote 11), Table 7.10.

¹⁵ BLSS 2012 (footnote 11), Table A3.73.

¹⁶ Ministry of Economic Affairs. 2010. *Integrated Energy*

of men—8 hours 43 minutes for women compared with 7 hours 46 minutes for men—suggesting that women work almost an hour more per day. Women were therefore considered overworked and time deprived by the study, which focused on well-being. Work hours included various forms of unpaid work, such as child care, labor contributions to community works, household maintenance and care of the sick, crop farming, and kitchen gardening.²¹ Time use was one of the domains resulting in the study's findings that women were less happy than men.²²

► ***The common assumption that women benefit from inheritance practices needs validation***

While it is often suggested that women are favored by patterns of inheritance in Bhutan, there is little data to confirm this or to identify what it means in practical terms. The data on landholdings mentioned in the sector context to this chapter was based on households engaged in RNR production rather than individuals, and it is clear from the data that holdings tend to be small and fragmented.²³ It would be interesting to know whether these patterns are similar for men and women landowners (or even male and female heads of household).

A broader question is whether a woman who inherits land is regarded (by household members, extension services, banks, etc.) as the farmer and decision maker about land use, including decisions such as whether to lease or farm, which crops to grow for own-production and sale, the technology to use, and whether to mortgage or sell the land. The language about ownership used in both the Inheritance Act, 1980 and the Land Act of Bhutan, 2007 suggests that land is regarded as a family asset rather than an individual asset and that family members have considerable moral and perhaps legal rights in major decisions about its use and disposal. In addition, under the law, sons and daughters have equal inheritance rights.²⁴

Where land has not been commodified and its value is primarily for subsistence, women who inherited could be seen as inheriting a set of management responsibilities on behalf of the family, including the well-being of their parents. One government study noted that these inheritance patterns have had the effect of limiting women's social and economic choices.²⁵ Another report found that the inheritance practices bound women to the land, with the result that they missed out on education.²⁶ The low rates of literacy among rural adult women may be attributable to this (in 2012, only 37% of rural women over age 25 were literate, compared with 58% of men).²⁷

With the development of a cash economy, the commercialization of agriculture, urbanization, and increased land scarcity, the meaning of land as a resource is also changing. More information is needed about the outcomes of current inheritance and land use practices for land ownership by women compared to men (and in urban compared to rural areas), to determine whether the new patterns that are developing are equitable.²⁸

► ***Limited information is available about women's access to other productive resources***

Access to productive resources other than land—including labor, extension services, and finance—is important to increasing the outputs and incomes of both women and men. However, there is limited information to judge whether women farmers have equitable access to these resources.

Labor. Shortage of labor is one of the major constraints reported by farmers (the fourth most important, after crop damage by wildlife, crop damage by insects and diseases, and insufficient irrigation). Labor shortages were most acute for smaller farmers

²¹ K. Ura et al. 2012. *An Extensive Analysis of the GNH Index*. Thimphu: Centre for Bhutan Studies. pp. 150–154.

²² Extensive Analysis (footnote 21), pp. 49–50, 60.

²³ RNR Census (footnote 3), pp. 34–37.

²⁴ See Appendix B for online access to the legislation cited.

²⁵ Ministry of Economic Affairs. 2008. *Gender Assessment of Ministry of Economic Affairs*. p. 6.

²⁶ Tarayana Foundation. 2009. *Alternative Report for Bhutan*. For the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, 44th Session. Thimphu. p. 2.

²⁷ BLSS 2012 (footnote 11), Table 3.1 (p.11).

²⁸ There is very little research on land and inheritance patterns and their gender implications in Bhutan, but one very interesting analysis is found in A Pain and P. Deki. 2004. The Matrilineal Inheritance of Land in Bhutan. *Contemporary South Asia*. 13:4. pp. 421–435.

seeking to commercialize.²⁹ It is likely to be felt particularly sharply by women who are household heads without spouses. Further, the labor time that women (with or without spouses) can allocate to work in the fields is restricted by the competing demands of household and community responsibilities, and the overall work burden they carry.

Extension. Extension services are provided by Department of Agriculture staff in extension centers throughout the country. In 2010 there were 138 RNR extension centers, 40 agriculture extension centers, and 42 livestock extension centers.³⁰ Data from 2012 show that almost one-third of rural households could reach an RNR center in less than 30 minutes, but another one-third of households required 2 hours or more to reach a center (with the rest falling in between). The patterns were similar for the other types of extension center, as well as for the various types of forestry offices that support and monitor the use of forest resources. Travel was primarily on foot.³¹

While the extent of the network of extension centers demonstrates a commitment to increasing access to services, it is also clear that many farmers need to invest significant time and effort to reach these services. This may be another constraint for women farmers, given the heavy workloads discussed above. However, no data are available on users of services (neither data on users nor on users by sex). Nor was it possible to find information on the participation of women in other forms of extension and training, such as farmer field schools.

Finance. Limited access to finance has been identified as an issue in several studies of agriculture and cottage and small industry. Rural areas are particularly underserved by the formal banking systems, where banks are few, access is difficult, and products are not well-adapted to small savers and borrowers.

A recent study of financial exclusion found that rural women were increasingly responsible for bringing farm produce to market and managing household finances, and were well

informed about financial products available to them. The study suggested they were an “untapped market segment.” However, no data were provided on the number of women farmers or women entrepreneurs using formal services, and none of the women interviewed had experience with using land as collateral.³²

► ***Cooperatives, farmers’ groups, and other self-help groups provide means to increase women’s options***

These groups provide a means for delivering and receiving inputs and for enhancing productivity, outputs, and income. Registration under the Cooperatives Act, 2001 (as amended in 2009) provides such groups with a juridical personality and thus certain protections, as well as the ability to apply for loans and access services. Registration of farmers’ groups became possible with the 2009 amendments, a change that made the benefits of registration available to many smaller groups (the act defines a “farmers’ group” as being three or more members deriving economic benefits from one or more economic enterprises related to the RNR sector).³³

As of February 2013, there were 19 cooperatives and 318 farmers’ groups registered under the Cooperatives Act.³⁴ There were also about 740 additional informal groups based on activities in agriculture, livestock, and forestry that were being encouraged to formalize and register by the Department of Agricultural Marketing and Cooperatives.

Women are reportedly active in cooperatives and farmers’ groups as well as other self-help groups, although limited data is as yet available (the Department of Agricultural Marketing and Cooperatives has recently started to collect such data on registered groups).³⁵ There is also limited documentation about how women benefit, though one field note from a project that is helping women form self-help groups stated “women tend to believe that their household income can be

²⁹ Sector Review (footnote 13), pp. 26–28, 33.

³⁰ RNR Census (footnote 3), p. 7.

³¹ BLSS 2012 (footnote 11), tables A3.78–79.

³² C. Niang et al. 2013. *Connecting the Disconnected: Coping Strategies of the Financially Excluded in Bhutan*. Washington, DC: World Bank. pp. 2, 22.

³³ *Cooperatives (Amendment) Act of Bhutan, 2009*. Art. 6 (definition), Art. 11 (effect of registration).

³⁴ Ministry of Agriculture and Forests. 2013. *Highlights of Achievements, 2012–2013*. p. 33

³⁵ Interview with the Department of Agricultural Marketing and Cooperatives, January 2012.

increased sustainably by working together as a group due to the group's inherent collective bargaining power and ability to enjoy economies of scale in production as well as marketing. However, they cite limitations in the form of lack of access, high transport costs, and waning interest of the members as possible bottlenecks.³⁶

► ***Domestic violence is prevalent and affects rural women's economic activities as well as their quality of life***

A recent national survey found that 26% of rural women aged 15–49 had experienced domestic violence at some point in their lives. An even more disturbing finding was the extent to which domestic violence was condoned by women, including younger women, educated women, and women in all regions. Among rural women aged 15–49, 72% believe that a man is justified in beating his wife or partner for any one of these reasons: neglect of children, going out without telling him, arguing with him, refusing sex, or burning food.³⁷ This level of tolerance of domestic violence suggests a lack of exposure to contrary views from political leaders, educational institutions, or other members of the community.

Government Commitments to Support Women or Gender Equality in the Sector

The continuing efforts of the government to bring extension services closer to local communities through decentralization and the network of RNR and other extension centers has benefited both women and men, but women in particular, given their involvement in the sector and the competing demands on their time and mobility. To date, government documents and strategies have not included any explicit measures to ensure that women are reached and served, or to monitor whether women have equitable

access. However, the National Plan of Action for Gender, 2008–2013 highlights two areas for attention: increasing the female–male ratio of extension workers to 2:5 through increasing the number recruited and ensuring adequate facilities for them, and increasing women's representation in training organized or facilitated by extension workers by targeting women as participants.³⁸

Looking Forward: Issues and Opportunities to Consider

This section highlights a number of issues and opportunities that merit consideration as part of current strategy development for agriculture and rural livelihoods.

► ***Data for informed policy development—beyond the household***

Given the prominent role of women in the agricultural work force, better information about their access to key productive resources, such as land, labor, extension services, group membership, and finance seems important to achieving goals such as increased agricultural output and increased rural incomes. Also important for planning is to identify the constraints faced by women.

All this requires sex-disaggregated data. However, most data on agricultural producers and rural well-being are based on the household, which provides no insight into how the aggregate output is produced, or about the different contributions made by male and female members, or about the ways in which the outputs or incomes are shared among household members. The data available on priorities for rural development are also at the household level, even though it is quite possible—even likely—that women and men have rather different views on the actions that could contribute most to household welfare.

The concern about providing policy makers with adequate sex-disaggregated and gender-specific data is most usefully raised when major instruments are under review. This includes the next population census in 2015, for which planning will soon begin. The next

³⁶ N. Tshering. 2013. Evolution of Farmers' Groups and Cooperatives in Bhutan. Prepared for ADB project 9155, Advancing Economic Opportunities of Women and Girls.

³⁷ National Statistics Bureau. *Bhutan Multiple Indicator Survey 2010*, p. 176 on women's attitudes (men's views were not reported).

³⁸ Gross National Happiness Commission and National Commission for Women and Children. *National Plan of Action for Gender, 2008–2013*, pp. 17–18, 21, 27.

living standards survey is likely to be done in 2017 and should also be reviewed through the same lens.

► ***Women's views on local development plans and priorities***

Women are underrepresented in the elected local governments that, under Bhutan's decentralization policy, are responsible for prioritization and planning at the local level. Neither are there many women among the professional and administrative staff who support local governments or deliver national programs at the local level.³⁹

Increasing the number of women in both elected and staff positions is an important long-term objective. But until this is achieved, it seems important to seek ways to compensate for the low representation of women, particularly as women and men could have different views about, for example, priorities for infrastructure investments, or approaches to allocating responsibilities for farm road maintenance, routing of power tiller tracks, or management of irrigation. Decisions on these matters could also have different consequences for women and men. Options for gaining women's views on priorities and decisions could include, for example, holding public consultations about development plans or about particular issues or decisions, and ensuring that the consultation approach enables women to attend and encourages women speak out. Another option could be to hold focus groups with women to facilitate discussion and to agree on recommendations that can be brought before decision makers.

► ***Labor-saving technologies to reduce women's work burden***

The 2012 agriculture sector study by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations placed considerable emphasis on labor shortages in agriculture that were particularly felt by smaller farmers, and on the burden carried by rural women due to rural–urban migration and reduced male involvement. The study advocated greater attention to the labor burden on women, and suggested that this could include efforts to

improve access to mechanized rice threshers and maize shellers.⁴⁰

Other options to consider in order to reduce women's work burdens and improve their ability to increase outputs and incomes in agriculture could include attention to labor-saving technologies for food processing and storage, improved cookstoves for households still using wood for home or fodder cooking, and reducing conflicting community labor demands (and/or converting them into paid work).

► ***Collective or commercial approaches to certain household tasks***

While there are household tasks that can be done more efficiently with the aid of technology, such as washing machines for laundry, many women do not benefit because the cost of the appliance is high for an individual household. However, this could be addressed through pooling resources to establish a common service facility available in a settlement or *Gewog* center. Another approach that could be further explored is the entrepreneurial possibility of pay-per-use laundries, or the provision of laundry services in schools and other institutions.

Collective approaches can also help meet needs for child care that are particularly acute during key points in the farming year, such as the harvest season. Providing child care has also been identified as a small business opportunity for women.

► ***Mobile phones as an economic asset for women farmers and entrepreneurs***

The 2012 Bhutan Living Standards Survey found that 91% of all rural households owned a mobile phone (including 84% of the lowest consumption quintile).⁴¹ Many households have more than one mobile, as is evident from data showing that in March 2012 there were almost 500,000 subscribers, or 70.5 subscribers per 100 inhabitants (a very rapid increase from 22.5 subscribers per 100 inhabitants in 2007).⁴²

³⁹ Technical Study (footnote 19), p. 9. This study provides a useful overview of the responsibilities of the different levels and how they are linked, pp. 4–15.

⁴⁰ Sector Review (footnote 13), section V.

⁴¹ BLSS 2012 (footnote 11), Table 8.3 (p. 58).

⁴² Cabinet Secretariat. 2012. *Fourth Annual Report of Lyonchhen Jigme Yoeser Thinley to the Ninth Session of First Parliament on the State of the Nation*. (Report to Parliament by the Prime Minister.) p. 45.

Now that ownership is so widespread, it would be timely to explore means of further exploiting the potential of mobile phones to facilitate women's economic activities. Mobile technology can, for example, be used to convey information about farming techniques and inputs, or about market prices for inputs or products; facilitate information sharing and collaboration with other producers and entrepreneurs; and provide a means of access to export markets.

Such opportunities are important to both women and men in agricultural and remote communities, but are particularly promising for women. This is because women predominate in the agricultural and rural labor force, are more likely than men to rely on information sources that do not require literacy, and have less time to travel due to family responsibilities and heavy workloads.

Initiatives to use mobile phones for outreach may benefit from strategies to ensure that they are known to and used by women, and are structured to address women's information priorities. This could apply, for example, to the interactive voice response system set up by the Ministry of Agriculture and Forests to disseminate market information on RNR products. This potentially useful

service was being promoted through advertising on television. As rural television ownership is relatively low, other routes to increase awareness could include contacts with women's groups, farmer's groups, and community forest groups, with the aim of ensuring women are aware of the system and its potential, and know how to access the information it provides.

► *Domestic violence prevention*

Domestic violence is not a specifically rural issue, but its prevalence means that it cannot be ignored in efforts to improve the well-being of the rural population. Messages related to women's rights to personal security and dignity may already be included in health and education programs, but other initiatives in rural areas offer opportunities to reinforce these messages with both women and men. In a consultation with local officials for this report, it was suggested that such actions could include information materials such as posters and leaflets in agriculture and livestock extension centers and awareness activities as part of nonformal education. Advocacy programs led by local leaders were also proposed as part of strategies to change public attitudes, as well as further training and funding of agencies working directly on this issue.⁴³

⁴³ Consultation workshops held in two Dzongkhags, Sarpang and Samdrup Jongkhar, in October 2013.

APPENDIX A. Tip Sheet on Integrating Gender Perspectives in Analysis and Planning in the Sector				
STEP 1: What are the positive outcomes for women or gender equality that could be achieved through gender mainstreaming?	⇒	STEP 2: What are some of the questions we should ask to better understand gender equality issues and women’s needs in these areas?	⇒	STEP 3: What steps or strategies could be considered or adapted to move forward in these areas?
Data available for sector analysis and planning: ➔ Better information about gender differences and gaps in activities, resources, rewards ➔ Better-targeted policies and programs, to better serve both women and men	⇒	• Has there been any systematic review from a gender perspective of the data available to national and local planners about agricultural producers, asset ownership, access to resources, outputs, etc.? Have gaps been identified? • Do analysts and planners have the knowledge and skills to use such data in situation analyses and program targeting?	⇒	• Allocate resources and expertise to identifying steps to improve the data provided from regular sources on gender dimensions of agricultural asset ownership, access to resources, outputs, and incomes. • Establish links between government officials and advocates for women’s empowerment (women’s organizations and research institutes).
Extension services and training aimed at increasing productivity and outputs: ➔ Increased access by women to information ➔ Increased productivity and outputs for women farmers (See also Appendix A to the chapter on the environment.)	⇒	• Are extension officers and services undertaking outreach to ensure that women participate equitably in training and services related to new crops, farming techniques and production methods, etc.? • Are women aware of and accessing available programs and services? • What proportion of extension service providers are women? Do women face constraints in undertaking this work that men do not? What are the views of women currently providing services on strategies to address these constraints?	⇒	• Consult with women on ways in which extension services could support them (including content of advisory services and means of delivering them). • Develop modules on women’s work and needs in the renewable natural resources sector for use in initial and in-service training for extension workers. • Ensure that data are collected by sex on the numbers reached by services or participating in training. • Develop a strategy to increase recruitment and retention of women extension agents.
Research on farming systems, inputs, and technologies: ➔ Better information on women’s role and labor ➔ Appropriate technologies to address women’s needs and work burdens	⇒	• Is there any updated information on rural–urban migration by sex, and what this means for agricultural labor supply? • What research has been done on women’s access to and use of agricultural technologies or labor-saving technologies?	⇒	• Allocate funds and expertise to targeted research to address gaps in information and analysis. • Identify labor-saving technologies that have the potential to increase women’s productivity in agriculture.
Farmers’ groups and cooperatives: ➔ Increased participation by women in such groups ➔ Increased opportunities, productivity, and incomes of women	⇒	• To what extent are women participating in farmers’ groups and cooperatives? Does their level of participation reflect their predominance in the rural and agricultural labor force? If not, why not? • What types of barriers might women face to taking leadership roles in farmers’ groups or registering informal groups? Would lack of literacy or confidence play a role?	⇒	• Develop and implement a strategy to encourage and support women’s participation in cooperatives and formal famers’ groups. • Assist women’s informal farmer or producer groups with knowledge or skills to become registered and to benefit from the benefits of registration.
Rural cottage and small industry (including agribusiness): ➔ Increased opportunities, productivity, and incomes of women (See also Appendix A to the chapter on private sector development.)	⇒	• Are agricultural and processing activities in which women predominate given due attention in the identification of supply chains to target and training needs? • Are women’s opportunities and capacities being looked at from a business development and economic growth perspective (i.e., not only from a vulnerable groups approach)?	⇒	• Set specific targets for resource allocations to and participation by women. • Identify horticultural and other products in which women predominate for targeting for productivity and value-chain improvements. • Explore options to address constraints to increased productivity faced by women producers and entrepreneurs.

APPENDIX B. Useful Resources for Gender Analysis in the Sector

Bhutan-based background information and gender-specific resources

Useful sector overviews and background documents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and World Bank. 2012. <i>Bhutan Agriculture Sector Review. Vol. 1. Issues, Institutions, Policies. Vol 2. Working Papers</i>. Rome. Prepared by G. Christensen et al. www.fao.org/investment/newsandmeetings/news/detail/en/c/164220 Ministry of Agriculture and Forests, Policy and Planning Division. 2013. <i>Major Achievements of the RNR Sector 2012–2013</i>. www.moaf.gov.bt/moaf/?wpfb_dl=790 Ministry of Agriculture and Forests. 2012. <i>Private investment in agriculture in Bhutan</i>. Prepared by M. Maetz, D. Dukpa, and Y. Dorji. Available from Policy and Planning Division. Nordic Consulting Group A/S. 2012. <i>Technical Study on Environmental and Social Impacts of Investments Made by Local Governments in Bhutan (with a particular focus on farm road investments)</i>. Study commissioned by the Sustainable Environment Support Programme, Gross National Happiness Commission, and the Representation Office of Denmark in Bhutan. Ministry of Agriculture and Forests and SNV-Bhutan. 2009. <i>Support to the Development of Farmers Groups' Enterprise in Eastern Bhutan</i>. www.moa.gov.bt/moa/downloads/downloadFiles/MoADownload7xt3860xg.pdf
Relevant legislation, policy statements and strategy papers (other than five-year plans)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Cottage and Small Industry Policy, 2012</i>. www.gnhc.gov.bt/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/CSMI-Policy-2012.pdf ; and the related, more operational strategy document <i>Cottage, Small and Medium Industry Development Strategy (2010–2020)</i>. www.moea.gov.bt/documents/files/pub5km617zd.pdf <i>Co-operative Act of Bhutan, 2001</i>. http://oag.gov.bt/resources/acts/ ; and <i>Cooperative (Amendment) Act of Bhutan, 2009</i>. www.nab.gov.bt/ActParliament/11CooperativeEng.pdf <i>Inheritance Act, 1980</i> : www.saarcgenderinfobase.org/uploads/bhutan/inheritance%20act.pdf ; and <i>Land Act of Bhutan 2007</i>. oag.gov.bt/resources/acts
Data sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ministry of Agriculture and Forests. <i>Renewable Natural Resources Census 2009</i>. http://catalog.ihsn.org/index.php/catalog/3615/related_materials (Covers crops, livestock and forest products and focuses mainly on production rather than producers. The annual agriculture survey is limited to crop production and provides even less information about producers.) National Statistics Bureau. <i>Bhutan Living Standards Survey 2012 Report</i>. www.adb.org/publications/bhutan-living-standards-survey-2012. Ministry of Labour and Human Resources. <i>Annual Labour Force Survey</i>. www.molhr.gov.bt/molhrsite/?page_id=577
Research and analysis on gender equality and agriculture and rural livelihoods in Bhutan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Pain and P. Deki. 2004. The Matrilineal Inheritance of Land in Bhutan. <i>Contemporary South Asia</i>. 13 (4). pp. 421–435. www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/09584930500070654 M. Terada. 2005. E-business Piloting and Readiness for Rural Women Weavers in Bhutan: Lessons Learned. In KIT (Royal Tropical Institute, The Netherlands), <i>Gender and ICTs for Development: A global sourcebook</i>. http://unpan1.un.org/intradoc/groups/public/documents/apcity/unpan038235.pdf

Other resources

Articles, guides and case studies related to the above	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> World Bank. 2009. <i>Gender in Agriculture Sourcebook</i>. www.worldbank.org/genderinag Site gives access by module, together with periodic updates. The following modules seem particularly relevant to Bhutan: Module 5: Gender and Agricultural Markets; Module 7: Gender in Agricultural Innovation and Learning; Module 9: Gender Issues in Rural Infrastructure for Agricultural Livelihoods. Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. 2011. <i>State of Food and Agriculture Report 2010–2011: Women in Agriculture: Closing the Gender Gap for Development</i>. www.fao.org/docrep/013/i2050e/i2050e.pdf A. Quisumbing and B. McClafferty. 2006. <i>Using Gender Research in Development</i>. International Food Policy Research Institute. www.ifpri.org/publication/using-gender-research-development A. Malhoutra, et al. 2012. <i>Connectivity. How Mobile Phones, Computers and the Internet Can Catalyze Women's Entrepreneurship</i>. International Center for Research on Women and Cherie Blair Foundation for Women. www.icrw.org/publications/connectivity-how-mobile-phones-computers-and-internet-can-catalyze-womens-entrepreneurs
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Toward Gender-Equitable Opportunities and Outcomes:

Education

Summary	
Sector context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The educational system has expanded significantly since the 1960s. • Basic education is publicly funded from pre-primary to class X. • Higher-secondary and tertiary students are supported on merit. • Most of the older generation remains illiterate, particularly women.
Gender equality issues relevant to sector activities and outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender parity in enrollment has been achieved in basic education. • Other elements of gender equality in education have received less attention, including equality of learning and outcomes. • Girls' poor performance in math and sciences is a constraint on participation and options at higher levels. • Girls' classroom experience may undermine performance. • Poor school water and sanitation facilities are also gender issues. • Equal participation in tertiary education and across subjects remains a major challenge. • Girls and boys in rural areas have limited exposure to women in leadership roles, including teachers. • University students, particularly young men, seem to doubt women's capacities and potential for leadership. • Low literacy levels of adult women constrain their participation in a modernizing society.
Government commitments to support women or gender equality in the sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commitment to universal access to basic education has benefited both girls and boys. • The Eleventh Five-Year Plan aims to address the gender gap by improving facilities (hostels and toilets for girls, and housing for female teachers).
Looking forward: issues and opportunities to consider	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance of girls in secondary education • Practical interpretation of the concept of "girl-friendly" schools • Role of the school system in promoting positive views on women's capacities and role in society • Leadership role of school principals on gender equality • Use of management tools to monitor and promote progress on the gender dimensions of higher education
Appendixes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tip Sheet on Integrating Gender Perspectives in the Sector • Useful Resources for Gender Analysis in the Sector

Sector Context

The average 10-year-old child today has very different educational prospects than his or her parents or grandparents. Ensuring access to education has been a major theme of government policy. The expansion of the education system has been dramatic—the number of schools and institutes increased from 11 before the first five-year plan in 1961 to 670 in 2012. Student numbers in the same period increased from about 400 to 188,214.¹ When Bhutanese students studying in India and abroad and students in monastic education are included in the count, the total number of students was over 200,000 in 2012—remarkably, students accounted for more than one-quarter of the total population of the country.²

Basic education in Bhutan consists of 7 years of primary (preprimary to class VI), 2 years of lower secondary (class VII–VIII), and 2 years of middle secondary (class IX–X). The language of instruction from the outset is English. For these first 11 years, the state covers tuition for all students, boarding where required, and certain other expenses such as stationery and textbooks. Meals and meal stipends are also provided for a significant proportion of boarding and day students.³ Enrollment levels in primary and secondary education are high, and data suggest that fewer than 2% of children aged 6–16 are out of school.⁴ Nationally there are no gender disparities in primary enrollment.⁵

For higher secondary (classes XI and XII), publicly funded education is on a merit basis, with the objective of providing places for a minimum of 40% of class X graduates.⁶ Those who do not continue their education after class X are considered school leavers

(rather than dropouts). Alternatives to public higher secondary include private secondary schools or vocational institutes. Fewer girls than boys make the transition from middle to higher-secondary education, though the gap is narrowing.

At the tertiary level, ten public and one private institute together make up the Royal University of Bhutan. Most students at the public institutes are publicly funded, and a significant number of scholarships are available for those studying in India or further abroad. At the tertiary level, there were only 71 girls for every 100 boys in 2012, a major improvement on the ratio of 41 girls per 100 boys in 2000 but still far from gender parity.⁷

The investment in education in recent decades has allowed an increasing proportion of successive age cohorts to gain access to basic and higher education, but a large proportion of today's adult population was not so fortunate. Rates of literacy remain low, particularly among women. A nonformal, education program to reach this group is delivered at the community level in collaboration with local governments. However, the national goal of achieving 70% adult literacy by 2013 is not yet in sight.

Responsibility for policy and administration of primary, secondary, nonformal and continuing education largely lies with the Ministry of Education. Although education is not a decentralized sector, *Dzongkhags* (districts) are involved in school construction and maintenance, the supply of teaching and learning materials, and the implementation of national policies. The *Dzongkhag* education officers who carry out these responsibilities report both to the *Dzongdag* (district administrator) and to the Ministry of Education.

Vocational training is managed by the Ministry of Labour and Human Resources (see chapter on work and unemployment).

¹ Ministry of Education. 2012. *Annual Education Statistics, 2012* p. 13.

² *Education Statistics, 2012* (footnote 1), p. 3.

³ *Education Statistics, 2012* (footnote 1), pp. 15, 73, 82.

⁴ *Education Statistics, 2012* (footnote 1), p. 7, Table IV (adjusted net enrollment ratios); also p. 28.

⁵ *Education Statistics, 2012* (footnote 1), p. 27.

⁶ Ministry of Education. 2012. *Annual Report on the Education Sector* (Addendum to the 4th Annual Report of the Hon. Prime Minister on the State of the Nation), p. 3.

⁷ *Education Statistics, 2012* (footnote 1), p. 7, Table III.

Gender Equality Issues Relevant to Sector Activities and Outcomes

► *Gender parity in basic education has largely been achieved*

Throughout basic education, from preprimary to class X, enrollment levels are high with virtually equal participation by girls and boys. Box 1 shows the numbers enrolled and the proportion of girls at each level of basic education. (Box 1 also shows enrollment in classes XI and XII, when enrollment drops and parity has not been achieved.)

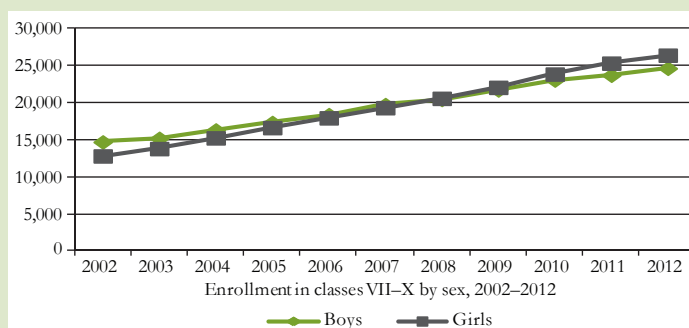
Box 1. Participation is now almost equal

Number of students enrolled by sex, girls as a percentage of all students, by class, 2012

Class	Number of girls	Number of boys	Percentage of girls
Preprimary	6,517	6,947	48.4
Class I	7,837	8,006	49.5
Class II	8,377	8,590	49.4
Class III	8,355	8,366	50.0
Class IV	8,435	8,315	50.4
Class V	7,856	7,917	49.8
Class VI	7,574	7,483	50.3
Class VII	7,369	6,990	51.3
Class VIII	7,178	6,350	53.1
Class IX	6,462	5,946	52.1
Class X	5,289	5,244	50.2
Class XI	3,635	3,751	49.2
Class XII	3,574	4,284	45.5
Total	88,458	88,189	50.1

Source: Bhutan Ministry of Education. *Annual Education Statistics, 2012*. Table 8.2.

Box 2. Enrollments in lower and middle secondary have increased significantly in the last 10 years



Source: Bhutan. Ministry of Education. *Annual Education Statistics, 2012*. Table 3.1.

The graph in Box 2 highlights the growth in places in lower and middle secondary between 2002 and 2012: enrollment almost doubled, and girls now account for just over half of all students. From data on “survival rates” (the percentage of an age cohort that enter primary who reach a particular level), it can be deduced that almost 98% of children enrolled in preprimary now reach the last grade of primary, and 85% now reach class X. Girls have done better than boys on both of these indicators since 2005 (the year sex-disaggregated data became available).⁸

► *Gender equality in education entails more than parity in enrollment*

While access to education is an important first step, the international commitments to gender equality in education (in particular, the 1990 World Declaration on Education for All, and the 1995 Platform for Action of the Fourth World Conference on Women) go beyond enrollment to focus on the quality of teaching and learning. They are also concerned about the link between schooling and progress toward gender equality and women’s empowerment. As noted in Box 3, equality of access is but one element of the achieving gender equality in education.

Several documents on education include references to reducing gender stereotyping in illustrations and examples in teaching materials, indicating that some efforts have been made to address elements of the education system that could discourage or disadvantage girls. However, issues that have received limited attention to date include the extent to which girls and boys receive equal attention and encouragement within the classroom, and whether teacher training promotes attitudes and classroom practices that are supportive of girls. While informal reports suggest that some school principals have been proactive in addressing issues that were hampering girls in their schools, it does not seem that this leadership role has been formalized as part of a strategy for improving the learning environment for girls.

⁸ *Education Statistics, 2012* (footnote 1), pp. 69–70, Table 11.1. Also see data on completion rates by sex, *Bhutan Living Standards Survey 2012*, p. 121.

► **Poor performance by girls in math and science narrows participation and options at higher levels**

The data on enrollments and survival through levels show that much has been achieved in basic education. However, the 2010 and 2011 studies on student learning by the Royal Education Council found that boys outperformed girls in math in classes IV, VI, and VIII (the three levels tested) and in sciences in classes VI and VIII.⁹ While the differences were not large, they may be the precursors of difficulties girls seem to face in the last 2 years of basic education (classes IX–X). This is when new subjects are introduced, notably additional science subjects (chemistry, physics, and biology). Poor performance in sciences and math seem to be a significant factor in the poor results obtained by girls in class X exams and their uncompetitive standing as candidates for places in the public higher-secondary system.

In 2012, 72.6% of boys and 68.6% of girls passed the class X exams.¹⁰ The education data published annually do not include details by sex on the numbers taking the exam or on performance by subject. However, a 2009 study done for the Ministry of Education on participation at the higher-secondary level highlighted difficulties with sciences and math as a key factor in poor performance in the class X board exams. When exam results were considered, the mean results for English showed girls doing marginally better, but the gap in favor of boys was greater for sciences, math, and *Dzongkha*. Interviews with girls who did not continue to class XI found that math was the subject that girls disliked most. (This is significant because of findings that those who like math score higher in the subject.) The predominant reason for not continuing their education that was given by the girls surveyed was poor performance in the class X board exams and not qualifying for the government schools.¹¹

⁹ Royal Education Council. 2012. *Annual Status of Student Learning 2011*. Thimphu. pp. 31–32.

¹⁰ *Education Statistics, 2012* (footnote 1), Table 3.3, Annex 3.

¹¹ Ministry of Education. 2009. *Glass ceiling in the educational curve for girls? Assessing girls' participation in education at higher secondary level in Bhutan*. pp. 23–26.

Box 3. Achieving gender equality in education requires attention to the learning process and outcomes as well as access

The Education for All Global Monitoring Report of 2003/4, *Gender and Education for All: the Leap to Equality*, included a useful, concise statement of what the achievement of full gender equality in education would include:

- *equality of opportunities*, in the sense that girls and boys are offered the same chances to access school, for example, parents, teachers, and society at large have no gender-biased attitudes;
- *equality in the learning process*, for example, girls and boys receive the same treatment and attention, follow the same curricula, enjoy teaching methods and teaching tools free of stereotypes and gender bias, are offered academic orientation and counseling that are not affected by gender biases, and profit from the same quantity and quality of appropriate educational infrastructure;
- *equality of outcomes*, for example, learning achievements, length of school careers, academic qualifications, and diplomas would not differ by gender; and
- *equality of external results*, for example, job opportunities, the time needed to find a job after leaving full-time education, the earnings of men and women with similar qualifications and experience, etc., would all be equal.

Source: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). 2003. *Gender and Education for All: the Leap to Equality*. EFA Global Monitoring Report 2003/4. Paris. p. 44.

Continuing from class X to higher secondary requires more than passing grades. As places are only available to about 40% of class X graduates with the best results, performance is critical. Students who do not qualify can continue in private schools, a path that is taken by more girls than boys (Box 4). In 2012, girls accounted for fewer than half the students studying in public schools in class XI and more than half those in the private system. In other words, while 66% of boys benefit from publicly funded higher-secondary education, only 60% of girls do. A difference between private and public education at this level, other than cost, is that few private schools offer science instruction. In public higher-secondary levels, the science stream is the most popular (44% of students), while in private schools the largest numbers are in the commerce stream (46% of students).

► **Girls' classroom experiences may be undermining their performance**

Findings from the 2009 study of girls in higher-secondary education suggest the need for more attention to the learning environment. For example, girls in a focus group reported that they hesitate to participate in class because

Box 4. Fewer girls than boys continue to public higher secondary XI

Year	Number of girls in class XI		Percentage of class XI students in the public system		Girls as a percentage of class XI public school	Girls as a percentage of class XI private school
	Public	Private	Girls	Boys		
2012	2,184	1,451	60.1	66.2	46.8	53.4
2011	1,493	1,604	48.2	57.7	41.9	51.4
2010	1,415	1,608	46.8	58.7	41.3	53.2
2009	1,361	1,356	50.1	58.4	41.6	49.9
2008	1,116	1,320	45.8	59.2	38.7	51.9
2007	1,096	942	53.8	61.8	41.1	49.2
2006	944	865	52.2	65.2	37.4	50.6
2005	770	851	47.5	47.9	50.0	50.4
2004	656	774	45.9	63.1	32.3	49.0
2003	571	613	48.2	65.3	32.6	49.4

Source: Ministry of Education. 2012. *Annual Education Statistics 2012*. Calculated from Table 8.4.

Box 5. Many students are boarders, particularly at higher levels

	Schools with boarding facilities, 2012		Students using boarding facilities, 2012	
	Number	Percent of all schools	Number	Percent of all students
Primary (I–VI)	43	12.2	3,743	7.4
Lower secondary (VII–VIII)	37	39.8	6,654	13.3
Middle secondary (IX–X)	28	47.5	8,385	21.0
Higher secondary (XI–X)	25	52.1	8,395	25.7
Total	133	24.1	27,177	15.7

Source: Ministry of Education. 2012. *Annual Education Statistics, 2012*. pp. 3, 4, 74.

boys make fun of them and insult them when their answers are wrong. A companion survey found that about 40% of girls were hesitant to participate, many of them because of nervousness and fear of being teased by boys and teachers. Teachers interviewed also noted the low participation by girls, and that poorer learning and exam results were related to less-active participation. Teachers said that girls lacked ambition and determination. The study also found that teachers gave more attention to boys.¹²

Taken together, these findings do not suggest an environment in which girls are encouraged to learn or where teachers see the need to reach out equally to girls and boys. It also suggests a lack of awareness among teachers

of the role they can play in promoting respectful interactions between girls and boys through their own behavior as well as through explicit messages.

► ***There are also gender dimensions to school facilities***

Bhutan's difficult terrain and dispersed population mean that a significant number of students are boarders, particularly at higher levels (Box 5). Basic facilities that boarding schools should provide include water supply and toilets. The latest data are that 46 boarding schools (35% of all boarding schools) had insufficient water supply, and 11 had no tap stands for students.¹³ National statistics on education do not provide information on the type of toilet facilities at the schools and whether there are separate toilets for girls. While water and toilets are of course important for both girls and boys, the lack of them is more troublesome for girls, particularly as they reach puberty.

A 2010 UNICEF survey documented problems with facilities.¹⁴ Most schools had toilets of some kind, but only 88% were in use, and only 65% could be considered fully functional. Most schools had separate toilets for girls and boys, and while the girls' toilets were somewhat more likely to be fully functional, the gap between the number of fully functional toilets and the official standard was greater for girls, particularly from class VII and higher (age 12 and up).

A smaller study done 1 year earlier found that issues of privacy and cleanliness were particularly acute during menstruation, with some girls going home at this time each month, shifting schools, or becoming day students rather than boarders. While these problems were not seen to result in dropping out of school, they did affect the school experience and could have some impact on the learning process. Another difficulty was that many school health counselors were men, and there were few female teachers to turn to for advice.¹⁵

¹³ *Education Statistics, 2012* (footnote 1), p. 75.

¹⁴ UNICEF Bhutan. 2010. *Baseline Assessment of Water and Sanitation Facilities in Schools*. pp. 5–6, 43–44.

¹⁵ UNICEF. 2009. *Equity in School Water and Sanitation. Bhutan Country Report*. Kathmandu. pp. 20–21.

¹² Glass Ceiling (footnote 11), pp. 30–33.

► ***Equal participation by girls at the tertiary level and across subjects remains a major challenge***

At the tertiary level, the proportion of girls takes another drop compared with the end of secondary. In the 2011 academic year, girls accounted for 38% of students in the public institutes of the Royal University of Bhutan. They were better represented in the one private institute, Royal Thimphu College, where students are self-financed (compared with the public institutes in which some 84% of students are publicly funded). Among undergraduates studying in India and further abroad, only 29% of those with scholarships are girls. There are also tertiary students abroad who are privately financed, and the proportion of girls in this category climbs to 45%.¹⁶ In short, girls are underrepresented among all tertiary-level students and even further underrepresented among students with state support.

Data on students by field of study are not available, but the enrollment numbers by college in Box 6 suggest that girls are particularly scarce in institutes that focus on science and engineering (the first three institutes listed).

► ***Girls and boys in rural areas have limited exposure to women in modern leadership roles, including teachers***

There are fewer women than men teachers at all levels of public education, with the largest gaps at the primary level, a more balanced representation at the middle levels, and a larger gap again at the higher-secondary level (Box 7).

Many primary schools are in small and remote communities to which women teachers are reluctant to go in the absence of housing and other facilities that would provide them with some security.¹⁷ These are also communities where adults have had limited access to education, and where most women remain illiterate. Women's representation among government officials providing services in other domains, such as agriculture, is also low. As for local government, women accounted

Box 6. Girls are outnumbered in all public tertiary institutes

Enrollment, 2011 academic year	Girls	Boys	Percent girls
Public institutes			
College of Natural Resources	30	121	19.9
Jigme Namgyel Polytechnic	92	321	22.3
College of Science and Technology	142	335	29.8
Samtse College of Education	231	426	35.2
National Institute of Traditional Medicine	19	32	37.3
Sherubtse College	426	642	39.9
Gaeddug College of Business Studies	415	580	41.7
Paro College of Education	355	494	41.8
Royal Institute of Health Sciences	158	197	44.5
Institute of Language and Cultural Studies	203	215	48.6
All public institutes	2,071	3,363	38.1
Private institute: Royal Thimphu College	478	403	54.3
Total	2,549	3,766	40.4

Source: Ministry of Education. 2012. *Annual Education Statistics, 2012*. Table 4.2. See also the list of graduates by institute, course, and sex in Ministry of Labour and Human Resources. 2011. *Labour Market Information Bulletin*. Table 5.8

Box 7. Women teachers and professors remain a minority

	Women teachers, public sector		Women teachers, private sector		Women teachers, total	
	(#)	(%)	(#)	(%)	(#)	(%)
Primary (I–VI)	787	33.7	88	66.7	875	35.5
Lower secondary (VII–VIII)	944	47.8	13	61.9	957	47.9
Middle secondary (IX–X)	731	43.4	54	60.7	785	44.3
Higher secondary (XI–XII)	421	35.3	98	27.6	519	33.5
Extended classrooms	21	14.4	0	0	21	14.4
All levels (I–XII)	2,904	39.6	253	42.4	3,157	39.8
Royal University of Bhutan	232	25.7	14	31.1	246	25.9

= number.

Source: Ministry of Education. 2012. *Annual Education Statistics, 2012*. Table 9.1, p. 51.

for fewer than 7% of candidates elected at the *Gewog* (county) level in the 2011 elections.¹⁸

► ***University students, particularly young men, seem to doubt women's potential for leadership***

A recent survey of students at Sherubtse College points to a significant gender divide in views about the extent to which women have equal rights in Bhutan and on women's

¹⁶ *Education Statistics, 2012* (footnote 1), pp. 35–37, percentages calculated from tables 4.3 and 4.4.

¹⁷ Interview, Ministry of Education, January 2013.

¹⁸ National Commission for Women and Children, and UN Women. 2012. *Bhutan: Women's Political Participation in 2011 Local Government Elections*. p. 14.

capacities and potential for leadership.¹⁹ The authors' summary of findings is as follows:

In general, college men did not seem as willing to believe that discrimination against women was a problem, or that anything further needed to be done about the issue. With regards to underrepresentation of women in the upper levels of the workplace and politics, reasons given by men tended to gravitate toward opinions on the inferior capabilities of women to handle such roles. In contrast, rather than rating themselves highly in such assessments of capability, women were more likely to believe in the inherent equality of the sexes. Reasons given by women as to their low representation in top positions in workplace and politics tended toward societal factors, and discrimination.

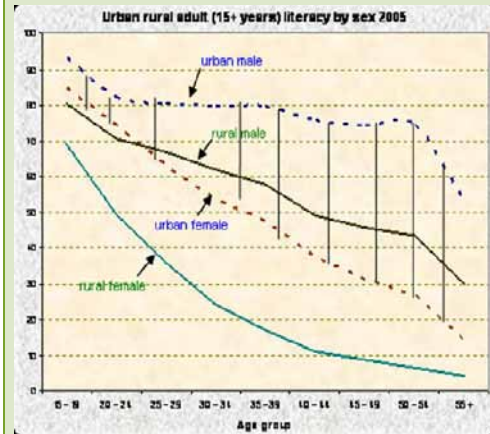
Sherubtse College is the premier institute for higher learning in Bhutan, and a major source of future civil servants and policy makers. This indication of student views on the relative capacities of women and men therefore suggests major continuing challenges in implementing government commitments to greater equality.

► ***Low literacy levels among adult women constrain their participation in a modernizing society***

The graph of literacy rates by sex and age in Box 8 clearly shows that, particularly among women, the older the person is, the less likely he or she is to have had the opportunity to gain an education. Box 9 summarizes the data for the same year and highlights the size of the gender gap in literacy rates—over 28% in rural areas.²⁰

Women accounted for 71% of students in the nonformal education program in 2012, when it reached 13,600 learners for basic literacy and follow-up courses. However, enabling all

Box 8. Literacy rates fall with age, particularly among women



Source: Gross National Happiness Commission. 2010. *Gender Statistics Bhutan*. 2010. Figure 4.9.

Box 9. Adult illiteracy remains high and there is a large gender gap

Literacy rates by sex and male–female differential, 2005

	Percentage literate, age 15+		Gender gap (male–female)
	Men	Women	
Urban	80.4	59.6	20.8
Rural	57.5	29.2	28.3
All	65.0	38.7	26.4

Source: Office of the Census Commissioner. *Population and Housing Census of Bhutan, 2005*. Calculated from Table 6.4.

those who missed an education to become literate remains an ongoing challenge. Those who remain illiterate are constrained in their participation in a modernizing society, as the lack of basic skills limits their economic options and also disqualifies them as candidates in local and national elections.

Government Commitments to Support Women or Gender Equality in the Sector

Bhutan's strong commitment to expanding access to education has benefited both girls and boys. Universal education up to class X is mandated by the 2008 Constitution, which also requires that "higher education is equally accessible to all on the basis of merit."²¹

¹⁹ T. Tshomo, T. Angmo, and S. Patel. 2010. *The Gender Divide in Bhutan: Opinions on the Status of Women Split along Gender Lines among College Students*. Research paper by members of Sherubtse College, Royal University of Bhutan.

²⁰ The data are from the 2005 census, which provides the most complete and reliable information. The Bhutan Living Standards Survey 2012 is more recent but seems to be based on self-reporting rather than a practical measure.

²¹ *Constitution of the Kingdom of Bhutan*. 2008. Article 16 (Principles of State Policy), Clause 16.

The Tenth Five-Year Plan, 2008–2013 noted that the rapid progress in access may have been at the expense of quality, and it made enhanced quality of learning the major theme for the sector. The 10th plan also highlighted the challenge of achieving gender parity in higher-secondary and tertiary education and stated that the gap between girls and boys

...justifies the need for affirmative action and relevant measures to ensure gender parity at these levels. This would promote the more effective utilization of female human capital in the labor market and address the gender imbalance in more remunerative jobs and higher profile occupations including the upper echelons of political and civil service positions.²²

The 10th plan aimed to achieve a ratio of 80 girls per 100 boys at the tertiary level (i.e., girls as 44.4% of enrolled students), reflecting the 2015 target set by the Millennium Development Goals. While the latest statistics show that this target was likely not met by the end of the plan period (as noted in Box 6, in 2012 girls accounted for 40.4% of tertiary students enrolled in Bhutan), the Eleventh Five-Year Plan, 2013–2018 does not include specific targets for girls' participation in higher education. The 11th plan's emphasis in relation to gender gaps is the improvement of facilities, including hostels and toilets for girls, and housing for female teachers.²³

The 11th plan also aimed to increase adult literacy to 70% (reiterating the target set in the previous plan.) Measures to achieve this target are likely to be of particular benefit to women, given the higher rate of illiteracy among women and the popularity among them of current nonformal education programs. Efforts are under way to raise the standards and enrich the curriculum of these programs. However, the numbers currently participating in the programs have been recognized as too low to achieve targets as ambitious as 70% literacy.²⁴

Looking Forward: Issues and Opportunities to Consider

This section highlights a number of issues and opportunities that merit consideration as part of educational strategies currently under development.

► *Performance of girls in secondary education*

There are a number of signals that the performance of girls in key subjects is weaker than that of boys, with implications for their progress to higher levels and the range of courses open to them at those levels. The identification of measures to address this issue would be assisted by more systematic data on performance by subject and sex in order to identify the age or class level at which performance gaps occur and to assess the significance of such gaps. A better understanding of the reasons for a gap in performance in subjects such as sciences and math would also be a necessary underpinning of an effective strategy.²⁵ Possible factors to investigate would include the extent to which teachers and the school system encourage and support girls to achieve in these subjects.

► *Practical interpretation of the concept of "girl-friendly" schools*

While "girl-friendly" schools and "gender-sensitive" curriculum are terms used in Bhutan, they do not seem to have been given much practical substance. In developing these concepts and related operational strategies, consideration could be given to

- teaching practices that consciously aim to give equal attention to girls and boys, support active participation by both girls and boys, and seek to achieve similar learning outcomes for each;
- classroom management approaches that demonstrate and reinforce attitudes of equality and respect between girls and boys; and
- teacher training and performance monitoring that reflects the above.

²² Gross National Happiness Commission. 2009. *Tenth Five-Year Plan, 2008–2013*. Vol. 1. p. 120.

²³ Gross National Happiness Commission. 2013. *Eleventh Five-Year Plan, 2013–2018*. p. 92.

²⁴ Education Sector Report (footnote 6), pp. 13, 21.

²⁵ This is a subject that has received attention around the world and there has been considerable research on causes and effective strategies for change. Several resources are listed in Appendix B to provide an entry point into this literature.

These are elements of quality learning experiences that would seem to be well aligned with government aims to improve the quality of education.

► ***Role of the school system in promoting positive views on women's capacities and role in society***

The role of the school system in challenging gender-based biases and other forms of intolerance was highlighted by the Royal Education Council in its 2011 report on student learning. The council pointed to the potential to overturn such biases and increase awareness of civic and citizenship responsibilities as part of a holistic approach to education in line with the concept of gross national happiness.²⁶

This could include the development of modules or teaching materials to use at different levels of the school system that challenge social stereotypes about the capacities and roles of women, and promote more positive views of women's participation in society and governance. To achieve this impact, it would be important to target boys as well as girls for these discussions, and ensure that male as well as female teachers are able to deliver these lessons effectively.

► ***Leadership role of school principals on gender equality***

Leadership by principals is important on a range of gender-related quality improvements in education. Such leadership could include support for teachers' effort to provide positive and equitable learning environments for girls and boys, promotion of more equal relations and respect between girls and boys, steps to

ensure that girls are free from harassment within schools, and attention to the adequacy of sanitation facilities. Responsibilities in these areas could be highlighted in formal mandates of principals and in professional development sessions.

► ***Use of management tools to monitor and promote progress on the gender dimensions of education***

Several different types of management tools are in use or in development as part of the effort to increase quality and standards across the education system. There is potential to use these to increase the information available to schools and education officials on gender equality in the education system. Examples include the following:

- *Performance Management System.* This assessment and feedback system has been in effect for 3 years and generates ratings of the performance of individual schools and their relative rankings. High-performing schools are given recognition and low-performing schools are provided with support by district education officers.²⁷ This system could provide an institutional means of monitoring how the performance of girls and boys compares in key subjects, and identifying schools that scored highest and lowest on this theme in order to assess what differentiated them and to identify good practices.
- *Annual Status of Student Learning Report.* This could include an element to study student sociocultural values and attitudes, including those related to gender (as proposed by the Royal Education Council).

²⁶ Status of Student Learning (footnote 9), pp. 162.

²⁷ Annual Report on Education (footnote 6), p. 5.

APPENDIX A. Tip Sheet on Integrating Gender Perspectives in Analysis and Planning in the Sector

STEP 1: What are the positive outcomes for women or gender equality that could be achieved through gender mainstreaming?	STEP 2: What are some of the questions we should ask to better understand gender equality issues and women's needs in these areas?	STEP 3: What steps or strategies could be considered or adapted to move forward in these areas?
<p>Policy, planning, and decision making in the education sector:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Increased awareness among decision makers of gender issues and gaps at all levels of education → More detailed data and research to clarify issues and inform strategies to ensure gender equity in learning environments and education outcomes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do education data and information systems provide the sex-disaggregated data required to assess and compare performance and outcomes for girls and boys (including competencies achieved, subjects studied, performance in key subject areas, etc.) as well as sex-disaggregated data on enrollment, drop-out, and completion? • Do planners and decision makers have the knowledge and skills to assess gender equality issues in education (not only about access, but also about performance, curriculum, teaching practices, and the messages the education system gives to both girls and boys)? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allocate resources and expertise to ensuring that the education data available to planners is sufficient to fully monitor and compare the experience of girls and boys. • Identify gaps in knowledge about the educational experience of girls compared to boys, and allocate resources and expertise for studies and research to bridge these gaps. • Establish links between government education planners and managers and advocates of gender equality in education (academics, research institutes, and nongovernment organizations).
<p>Management tools for monitoring educational quality and standards:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Better information for policy makers and school officials on gender equality in education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do any of the management tools in use or under development provide any feedback on issues, problems, or achievements in different schools or districts with respect to the performance of girls compared to boys? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider whether any current management tools can incorporate elements to provide feedback on problems and performance on gender equality concerns. • Use this information to identify strategies that work in Bhutan to increase the performance and confidence of girls.
<p>Curricula and teaching materials:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Stronger contribution of the education system to positive attitudes to girls and women and to gender equality in society → Better knowledge among both girls and boys of women's rights as citizens, workers, and family members 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do school textbooks and other learning materials reflect positive attitudes toward girls and women and their capacities? • Does the curriculum include learning objectives and modules on equal rights of women and men in schools, the family, the market, politics, etc.? • Do those responsible for curriculum review and design have the skills and experience to identify gender bias in existing materials, and to develop curriculum that promotes equitable opportunities and relations between women and men? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revise curriculum and teaching materials to eliminate gender stereotypes, provide positive female role models, and incorporate positive messages on equal relations between girls and boys and men and women. • Develop teaching materials suitable for different levels that engage both girls and boys in challenging sociocultural stereotypes about girls and boys, and women and men. • Develop curriculum modules on human rights and gender equality and their link to objectives for gross national happiness.
<p>Strategies for child-friendly schools and teaching practices:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Schools that are girl friendly and support girls in developing their potential 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have teaching practices related to gender been studied as part of strategies for child-friendly schools? • Are teachers aware of the ways in which their own behavior can reinforce stereotypes and inequality (e.g., a tendency to assign tasks such as fetching water and classroom cleaning to girls)? • Are teachers aware of how their actions can influence the confidence and ambitions of girls (e.g., negatively, by not calling on them, disparaging their capacities, channeling them away from science subjects, etc.)? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage teachers to discuss and assess their own attitudes about male and female roles and capacities, and how this could influence their behavior and that of their students. • Develop guidance materials for teachers (male and female) on ways in which they can support girls and promote gender equality in teaching practices and classroom management. • Seek ways to increase the children's exposure to women in a range of professional and leadership roles, as a means of counterbalancing narrower visions of potential choices and capacities of girls.

APPENDIX A. Tip Sheet on Integrating Gender Perspectives in Analysis and Planning in the Sector		
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<p>Teacher training (pre-service and in-service):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Teachers more aware and skilled in providing equal support to girls → Teachers more capable of delivering messages on the equal rights of girls and women 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do degree programs and pre-service training for teachers address issues of gender equality in society and how it relates to teaching practice? • What proportion of teachers has participated in in-service gender equality training or workshops? • Do the materials and approaches available help teachers question social values, behaviors, and attitudes about women and men and the relations between them? Are they able to apply what they learn to their teaching practices and subjects? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage the diploma- and degree-granting institutions to incorporate modules on gender equality in society and education. • Develop modules for in-service teacher training that raise awareness of how teaching practices can inadvertently favor boys or affect the learning and confidence of girls. • Provide training and support to teachers to enable them to deliver teaching modules on gender equality and women's rights. • Regularly assess such training for effectiveness and revise it accordingly.
<p>Proportion of women teachers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Increased numbers of women in the teaching profession as role models for girls 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For rural primary schools, are there barriers other than safe accommodation that keep the numbers of female teachers low? • At the middle- and higher-secondary levels, is there a good representation of women teachers across subjects? Are there adequate numbers in the subjects in which girls do less well? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve accommodation available to rural teachers to encourage and enable women to accept rural postings. • Consider whether changes in working conditions, such as the length of postings or provisions for an accompanying spouse, would make rural postings more attractive and possible for women teachers. • Explore options to increase the number of women in teacher training in sciences and math.
<p>Role and responsibilities of school principals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Better learning opportunities resulting from stronger leadership by principals to ensure a positive learning environment for girls 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are school principals aware of gender equality issues in education and able to provide positive leadership within the school (e.g., in ensuring that girls are given equal attention in the classroom, encouraged to perform, and protected from harassment)? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revise the mandates of school principals to include an explicit responsibility for promoting an equitable learning environment for girls and boys. • Recognize principals with schools that perform well in similar learning outcomes for girls and boys in key subjects, and a balanced distribution across subjects.
<p><i>Dzongkhag</i> officials, school inspectors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Another source of support to girl-friendly schools from gender-aware officials → Another source of role models for rural girls from women in such positions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are such officials (women and men) provided with training opportunities on the same gender equality themes as teachers and school principals? • Are women well represented in these roles (which are visible and influential in the community)? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include materials and discussions on gender equality in education in professional development and manuals for <i>Dzongkhag</i> officials and school inspectors. • Encourage and support women to take positions in educational administration.
<p>Standards and maintenance of school water supply and sanitation facilities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Improved availability of water and appropriate toilet facilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are requirements for school water and toilet facilities for girls and boys enforced by <i>Dzongkhag</i> and ministry officials? • Are schools at all levels provided with a specific budget to cover the provision and maintenance of water supply and toilet facilities? • Do schools with adolescent girls monitor the privacy, cleanliness, and functioning of toilet facilities? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allocate resources to installing and upgrading water supply and toilet facilities, and for ongoing maintenance. • Monitor the provision of toilet facilities through regular data collection (as is currently done for tap stands, electricity, and telephone connections).

APPENDIX B. Useful Resources for Gender Analysis in the Sector

Bhutan-based background information and gender-specific resources

Useful sector overviews and background documents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ministry of Education. 2012. <i>Annual Education Statistics, 2012</i>. Not limited to statistics, but provides an overview of the structure of the education system. www.education.gov.bt/aes Ministry of Education. <i>Annual Education Report, 2011–2012</i>. www.education.gov.bt/publications Royal Education Council. 2012. <i>Annual Status of Student Learning 2011</i>. www.rec.org.bt
Relevant policy documents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ministry of Education. <i>Education Policy Guidelines and Instructions 2012</i>. www.education.gov.bt/publications Ministry of Education. <i>Tertiary Education Policy 2010</i>. www.education.gov.bt/publications
Data sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ministry of Education. 2012. <i>Annual Education Statistics, 2012</i>. www.education.gov.bt/aes Royal University of Bhutan, annual statistics provided online: www.rub.edu.bt/index.php/annual-statistics National Statistics Bureau. 2013. <i>Bhutan Living Standards Survey 2012 Report</i>. www.adb.org/publications/bhutan-living-standards-survey-2012
Research and analyses on gender and education in Bhutan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> P. Choden. 2012. <i>Gender Gap in Household Investment: A Study on Bhutan</i>. Masters by research thesis, Queensland University of Technology. http://eprints.qut.edu.au/52725 Ministry of Education. 2009. Glass ceiling in the educational curve for girls? Assessing girls' participation in education at higher secondary level in Bhutan. Prepared by R. Samdrup for the Policy and Planning Division. http://doc.iiep.unesco.org/cgi-bin/wwwi32.exe/%5Bin=epidoc1.in%5D/?t2000=029662/(100) K. Namgyal. 2012. Bhutan: School-level bottleneck analysis of sanitation facilities. In UNICEF, <i>WASH in Schools Distance-learning Course: Learnings from the Field 2012</i>. www.unicef.org/wash/schools/files/WinS_Distance_Learning_Course_-_Learnings_from_the_Field.pdf T. Tshomo, T. Angmo, and S. Patel. 2010. <i>The Gender Divide in Bhutan: Opinions on the Status of Women Split along Gender Lines among College Students</i>. Research paper by members of Sherubtse College, Royal University of Bhutan. http://jr.sherubtse.edu.bt/index.php/pd1/article/view/46 UNICEF Bhutan. 2010. <i>Baseline Assessment of Water and Sanitation Facilities in Schools</i>. www.washinschoolsmapping.com/projects/Bhutan.html (link under reference materials) UNICEF. 2009. <i>Equity in School Water and Sanitation, Overcoming Exclusion and Discrimination in South Asia. Bhutan Country Report</i>. Kathmandu. UNICEF Regional Office for South Asia. www.unicef.org/rosa/WASH_Report_Bhutan_(Final_Version)_11_Dec_09.pdf

Other resources

Other research and articles on gender and education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> E. Unterhalter and C. Challender. 2005. The Education MDGs: Achieving Gender Equality through Curriculum and Pedagogy Change. <i>Gender and Development</i>. 13(1). pp. 44–55. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13552070512331332276 S. Aikman and E. Unterhalter, eds. 2007. <i>Practising Gender Equality in Education</i>. Oxford: Oxfam GB. http://policy-practice.oxfam.org.uk/publications/practising-gender-equality-in-education-115528 UNESCO/United Nations Girls' Education Initiative (UNGEI). 2005. <i>Scaling Up Good Practices in Girls' Education</i>. http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0014/001422/142240E.pdf
Resources on girls in science and math education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> United Nations Commission on the Status of Women, Expert Group Meeting on Gender, Science and Technology, 2010 See website for papers by experts and the expert group report: www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/egm/gst_2010/index.html B. Koirala and S. Acharya. 2005. Girls in Science and Technology Education: A Study on Access, Participation and Performance of Girls in Nepal. <i>UNESCO Kathmandu Series of Monographs and Working Papers</i>. No. 4. www.ungei.org/resources/files/Document1362010390.8822443.pdf UNGEI. www.ungei.org/
Guides, case studies, websites on gender and education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Canadian International Development Agency. 2010. <i>Gender Equality and Education Tip Sheets</i>. www.oecd.org/dac/genderequalityanddevelopment/46460984.pdf Gender Equity Movement in Schools. <i>Building Support for Gender Equality among Young Adolescents in School: Findings from Mumbai, India</i>. www.ungei.org/resources/index_2841.html UNGEI. www.ungei.org/

Toward Gender-Equitable Opportunities and Outcomes:

Energy

Summary	
Sector context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hydropower is the engine of economic growth and development. There has been considerable progress toward “electricity for all.” Households are the major energy users and are still heavily dependent on biomass.
Gender equality issues relevant to sector activities and outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Access to modern energy services and to fuel- and labor-saving technologies is important to equal opportunities for women. Many rural households still rely on fuelwood for cooking. Household labor-saving technologies are not yet in widespread use. Improved cookstoves can reduce fuelwood use, particularly when designed in light of household needs. Employees in the energy sector are much more likely to be male than female. While women are still in the minority, they account for a good proportion of graduates in fields relevant to the energy sector. Equitable access by women to technical, maintenance, and construction opportunities is important.
Government commitments to support women or gender equality in the sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The gross national happiness framework applied to energy sector planning promotes equitable access to new economic opportunities and household access to clean energy. Legislative commitments to equal opportunities in employment also apply to the energy sector, including hydropower projects and the provision of energy services to households. The commitments to support women’s entrepreneurship in the 2012 Cottage, Small and Medium Industry Policy are also relevant to energy-related entrepreneurship.
Looking forward: issues and opportunities to consider	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Women as agents for household energy efficiency Women’s participation in energy-related livelihoods and entrepreneurship Women’s participation as employees, professionals, and managers in the energy sector Monitoring and targets for women’s participation in the sector
Appendixes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tip Sheet on Integrating Gender Perspectives in the Sector Useful Resources for Gender Analysis in the Sector

Sector Context

The energy sector drives economic growth and underpins public revenues in Bhutan. Hydropower is the country's major resource, and earnings from electricity exports provide the means to fund socioeconomic development.

Electricity generation is relatively new in Bhutan—the first diesel generators were installed in 1964 in Phuentsholing and Samtse (both on the southern border). A small hydropower plant was commissioned in 1967 to supply the Thimphu region. Generation significantly increased when the Chhukha plant was commissioned in 1988 and Bhutan began its exports to India.¹

The country's hydropower potential is only beginning to be developed. The current installed capacity is 1,488 megawatts. Several new projects are planned and four are already under construction, and these are expected to expand capacity to 10,000 megawatts by 2020. The feasible generation capacity is estimated to be close to 24,000 megawatts.²

The Tenth Five-Year Plan set an ambitious objective of electricity for all by 2013, accelerating a target that had previously been set for 2020. Electrification was seen as key to improving the quality of life and reducing poverty. For households that could not be served through the national electricity grid because of difficult terrain, the plan proposed the use of alternative sources, such as solar and microhydro.³

Much progress has been made in household electrification, as is documented in Box 1. The proportion of rural households with electricity went from 60.3% in 2007 to 87.3% in 2012. As almost all urban households had electricity by 2012, the overall proportion of households with electricity was 91.5%. Almost all were served by the grid—only 2.9% derived

Box 1. Much progress has been made with household electrification

Percentage of households with electricity, by rural and urban residence, 2007 and 2012

	Rural	Urban	Total
2007	60.3	98.7	71.8
2012	87.3	99.6	91.5

Sources: National Statistics Bureau. *Bhutan Living Standards Survey, 2007 Report*. Table 7.14; *Bhutan Living Standards Survey, 2012 Report*. Table 7.9.

electricity from solar sources and 0.3% from generators.⁴

In addition to its socioeconomic benefits, electrification also supports the objective of reducing fuelwood consumption. Fuelwood remains the main source of primary energy, accounting for 58% of total energy supply, compared to electricity at 16%. Households account for almost half of energy demand, and about 90% of this demand is met through fuelwood.⁵

Environmental considerations are important in the energy sector. While energy needs are largely met from renewable resources, the extent of fuelwood use puts pressure on the forest resources that constitute another of the country's major assets (as recognized in the constitutional commitment to maintain 60% forest cover). In the development of hydropower, watershed protection is critical to the sustainability of hydropower generation. Also of concern is the potential impact of global warming and climate change on glacial lakes and waterfall patterns, and on the water supply for power generation.

These concerns are all recognized in the Eleventh Five-Year Plan, which aims to enhance institutional and human capacity in the sector, prepare an energy allocation approach that supports optimum use of energy and green industrial development, and promote alternative renewable energy.⁶

Key government agencies in the energy sector include three departments of the Ministry of Economic Affairs: the departments of

¹ Ministry of Economic Affairs. 2010. *Integrated Energy Management Master Plan for Bhutan*. p. 4.

² Royal Government of Bhutan. 2012. *Bhutan: Rapid Assessment and Gap Analysis*. pp. 2–3. Prepared with support from the ADB-supported regional technical assistance project, Empowering the Poor through Increasing Access to Energy.

³ Gross National Happiness Commission. 2009. *Tenth Five-Year Plan, 2008–2013*. Vol. 1. pp. 33, 114.

⁴ National Statistics Bureau. *Bhutan Living Standards Survey 2012 Report*. Table 7.9

⁵ Rapid Assessment (footnote 2), p. 3.

⁶ Gross National Happiness Commission. 2013. *Eleventh Five-Year Plan, 2013–2018*. Vol. 1. p. 133.

Hydropower and Power Systems, Renewable Energy, and Hydro-Meteorological Services (formerly grouped together as the Department of Energy). The two major utility companies are the Druk Green Power Corporation, which owns and operates the large hydropower plants; and the Bhutan Power Corporation, which manages transmission, distribution,

and retail systems and owns the microhydro and diesel plants.

The Ministry of Agriculture and Forests also has an important role in relation to biomass energy, in particular fuelwood, and alternative energy initiatives such as biogas.

Gender Equality Issues Relevant to Sector Activities and Outcomes

► *Access to modern energy services and to fuel- and labor-saving technologies are important to equal opportunities for women*

Adequate, clean, and affordable energy at the household level has a key role in gender equality and women's well-being. While all household members benefit from access to modern energy services and to technologies using them, they are particularly important to women because they reduce

- the time and human energy required to collect fuelwood and other biomass—most of this time and energy is supplied by women;
- the time and labor for household tasks with the use of modern energy and technologies—rice and curry cookers, water boilers, and clothes-washing machines—considerably lighten the burden of what is usually women's work (fuel-saving technologies such as improved wood cooking stoves and biogas also contribute); and
- smoke-induced illnesses, which most benefits those most homebound and therefore most exposed (particularly women and children) and those who care for the ill (most often women).

► *Many rural households continue to rely on fuelwood*

Despite major progress toward making electricity available to all households, fuelwood and other biomass remains the predominant source of household energy. The 2010 Integrated Energy Management Master Plan for Bhutan reported that households accounted for 49% of energy consumption (almost twice the proportion accounted for by industry), and that 91% of

Box 2. Households consume significant amounts of fuelwood

Fuelwood consumption by use, 2005 (in tons)

Use	Rural	Urban	Total
Cooking	343,469	5,533	349,003
Space heating	22,600	14,472	37,072
Fodder cooking	155,760	0	155,760
Total	521,829	20,006	541,834

Source: Ministry of Economic Affairs. 2010. *Integrated Energy Management Master Plan for Bhutan*. Table 2, p. 9 (also provides data by Dzongkhag).

Box 3. Household fuel use differs for lighting, cooking, and heating

Percentage of households using types of fuel for household lighting, cooking, and heating, by urban and rural residence, 2007 and 2012. (Note that households may use multiple sources, e.g., do some cooking with electricity and some with wood.)

Requirement	Rural		Urban	
	2007	2012	2007	2012
Lighting				
Electricity	56.1	83.1	97.4	97.6
Kerosene/gas lamps	37.3	11.7	1.9	1.9
Candles	0.7	0.2	0.2	0.1
Others	5.8	5.0	0.5	0.4
Cooking				
Gas	13.0	45.4	44.8	91.7
Electricity	27.4	76.2	50.1	97.9
Wood	57.2	49.3	2.3	1.7
Kerosene	0.2	1.7	—	0.5
Others	0.6	0.4	1.5	0.1
Heating				
No heating	44.1	55.7	37.2	37.1
<i>Bukhari</i> (woodstove)	29.8	31.4	21.3	13.8
Electric heater	3.4	7.5	36.1	45.4
Kerosene heater	0.5	0.6	2.7	3.2
Straw/brush/manure stove	3.5	0.1	0.7	0.2
Others	18.7	18.7	2.0	0.2
Total households	87,700	84,427	37,800	43,515

— = sample estimate too small.

Source: National Bureau of Statistics. *Bhutan Living Standards Survey, 2007 Report*. Table 7.7; *Bhutan Living Standards Survey, 2012 Report*. Table 7.10.

residential consumption was in the form of biomass, mostly fuelwood.⁷

Cooking for household members and cooking of fodder account for most of the fuelwood consumed (Box 2). The amount used for space heating seems relatively low, but many households use the same device (the *bukhar*) for both cooking and heating; in these instances the source study attributed the fuelwood use to cooking. Dependence on fuelwood is greater in rural areas, where most of the population is still found. Estimates of the effect of electrification on rural households suggest that it results in a 25% reduction in fuelwood consumption.⁸ This is a significant decrease, but clearly even electrified households continue to use fuelwood for much of their energy needs.

Fuels used in 2012 for different household needs are shown in Box 3, together with the 2007 figures to show changes in the 5-year period. The proportion of rural households using electricity for lighting increased from 56% in 2007 to 83% in 2012, reflecting progress in rural electrification. The use of electricity for cooking also increased significantly, from 27.4% to 76.2% of rural households in the same period, as did the use of gas for cooking, from 13.0% to 45.4%. However, almost half of rural households continued to use wood for at least some of their cooking, and the reduction from 5 years previously was not as dramatic for cooking as the reduction for other uses. Almost one-third of rural households also continued to use wood for heating.

Fuelwood collection is mostly done by women and it is time-consuming. One study estimated that, on average, it takes about one person-month per year.⁹ While fuelwood does not require a cash outlay, it has a cost in women's time and energy. About 90% of rural households reported the amount of fuelwood used by the number of backloads per month,

Box 4. Wood is a much less efficient fuel than other options

Thermal efficiency of cooking devices that use different fuels

Fuel	Device	Efficiency (%)
Electricity	Rice cooker	78–94
LPG	LPG stove	60
Biogas	Biogas stove	55
Kerosene	Pressure stove	40
Kerosene	Wick stove	36
Biomass	Improved stove	20–35
Biomass	Traditional stove	8–18

LPG = liquefied petroleum gas.

Source: Ministry of Economic Affairs. 2010. *Integrated Energy Management Master Plan for Bhutan*. Table 3, p. 10

which was as many 20 backloads per month for almost half of those households.¹⁰

Continued reliance on fuelwood also has an environmental cost as it puts pressures on forest resources. In addition, the energy efficiency of cooking with wood is lower than with other possible fuels (Box 4).

► **Household labor-saving technologies are not yet in widespread use**

Human energy and time are also required for household tasks that tend to be done by women, particularly where they are done without the benefit of modern labor-saving appliances. This is evident in the time savings for women from electrification. One study found that the use of electricity for cooking saved women 1.5 hours per day.¹¹

Box 5 provides an insight into patterns of ownership of labor-saving devices for common household tasks. In rural areas, the most common devices are rice cookers, and a substantial proportion of households have curry cookers and water boilers. Modern stoves and refrigerators are rare, and very few rural households have a washing machine. Ownership of all such appliances is more likely

⁷ Integrated Energy Management (footnote 1), p. 6. While this was based on 2005 data, another assessment done in 2012 states that this energy mix is unlikely to have greatly changed: see Bhutan: Rapid Assessment (footnote 2), p. 3.

⁸ Integrated Energy Management (footnote 1), p. 8.

⁹ Integrated Energy Management (footnote 1), p. 7.

¹⁰ National Statistics Bureau. *Bhutan Living Standards Survey 2012 Report*. Table A3.73.

¹¹ ADB. 2010. *Asian Development Bank's Assistance for Rural Electrification in Bhutan—Does Electrification Improve Quality of Rural Life?* Manila (Impact Evaluation Study: BHU 2010.27). p. 19.

Box 5. Household labor-saving appliances are not yet common, particularly among poorer rural households

Percentage of households owning selected appliances, by urban and rural residence and per capita expenditure quintile, 2012

Appliance	Rural		Urban	
	Poorest quintile	Richest quintile	Poorest quintile	Richest quintile
Rice cooker	52.9	90.0	95.9	98.2
Curry cooker	36.0	78.9	89.2	93.7
Water boiler	28.3	78.5	82.9	95.7
Modern stove	6.5	42.3	37.8	57.7
Refrigerator	6.4	50.2	61.6	82.6
Washing machine	1.6	14.6	6.3	44.3
Microwave oven	1.0	10.9	6.4	37.1

Source: National Statistics Bureau. *Bhutan Living Standards Survey, 2012 Report*. Tables 8.2, 8.3.

in urban areas—in some cases ownership rates are higher among the poorest urban quintile than among the richest rural quintile.

► ***Improved cookstoves can reduce fuelwood use, particularly when designed in light of household needs***

Traditional cookstoves are built of stone and mud, with a door through which to insert fuel and remove ash, and two or three pot holes, each of which have three raised lumps to keep the pots in place. As there is no chimney, the potholes allow the flames to encircle the pots and the smoke to escape into the room. Indoor air quality in these instances is very poor.¹²

A major initiative to introduce smokeless stoves in Bhutan began in 1985 when some 14,000 such stoves were installed. However, these stoves did not store and radiate heat, which was a major disadvantage in an area with cold winter weather. The stoves were not used consistently or were used in ways that undermined fuel efficiency, and the impact was less than hoped. Traditional stoves continued to be used, particularly in the winter, by households that could not afford a separate heating device. The chimneys were dismantled as they were thought to be a fire hazard and in order to use the smoke to dry chilies, fish, and grain. The potholes and firebox were modified to use

larger pieces of fuelwood, and practices to regulate airflow for optimum efficiency were not used.¹³

One commentary on this experience concludes that a major component of attempts to introduce energy-efficient stoves is an appropriate training package for users, focused particularly on women.¹⁴ Another necessary element of a successful approach would be to recognize the multiple functions of the traditional stoves to be replaced—space heating in particular—and to provide complementary support to enable households to meet these needs.

Finally, fodder cooking also consumes a significant amount of fuelwood. Most of this continues to be done on traditional cookstoves, in both electrified and non-electrified households. As fodder cooking accounts for 30% of fuelwood use in rural areas (Box 2), improved cookstoves or options could result in important savings of fuelwood and of the human time and energy required to obtain it.

► ***Employees in the energy sector are much more likely to be male than female***

Available data do not provide a clear view on employment in the overall energy sector or on hydropower along, but they suggest that women are underrepresented in all occupations in the sector, with the possible exception of clerks. The 2012 Labour Force Survey found that women accounted for 21.5% of workers in the category “electricity, gas, and water supply,” compared with 33.6% of workers in all nonagricultural economic activities. Women in the “electricity, gas, and water supply” category tended toward the white-collar occupations, and this is also reflected in the educational profile: a larger proportion of women than men working in this category had completed higher-secondary schooling or had a bachelor’s degree (37.6% of women compared with 29.4% of men).¹⁵

¹³ Palit and Garud (footnote 12), p. 36.

¹⁴ Palit and Garud (footnote 12), pp. 35–36.

¹⁵ Ministry of Labour and Human Resources. 2012. *Labour Force Survey Report, 2012*. Calculated from tables 7.0 and 7.2 (employment by sex in this category) and tables 11.0 and 11.2 (level of education by sex in the same category of economic activity).

¹² D. Palit and S. Garud. 2010. Energy Consumption in the Residential Sector in the Himalaya Kingdom of Bhutan. *Boiling Point*. 58. pp. 34–36.

The two state energy corporations are major employers. Bhutan Power Corporation reported that it had about 2,000 employees in 2011 (giving no breakdown by sex). Druk Green Power Corporation reported 1,730 employees in 2010 and the prospect of “aggressive recruitment” of another 400–500 annually because of upcoming projects. In 2010, 18% of its employees were female.¹⁶

- **While women are still in a minority, they account for a substantial proportion of graduates in fields relevant to the energy sector**

Energy is a key sector of the economy and accounts for a significant number of jobs at various levels: managerial, professional, clerical, skilled, and unskilled. The investments in expanding hydropower envisaged under the 11th plan will generate new opportunities in all these areas.

While women are still in a minority among skilled trades workers and professionals in fields relevant to the energy sector, an increasing number are entering those fields. The data in Box 6 for 2009–2011 shows that women constitute an increasing proportion of graduates with engineering diplomas and degrees from institutes in Bhutan. Women are thus an increasingly important component in the pool from which employers will meet their human resource needs.

- **Equitable access by women to technical, maintenance, and construction opportunities is also important**

The common assumption that women would be uninterested in physical labor and construction work is open to challenge. The socioeconomic study for the planned Nikachhu Hydropower Project found that 80% of the women responding to a survey said that they were willing to work in project-related construction.¹⁷

Very little information is available on the number of women currently working in skilled and construction trades, or in training

Box 6. Women now account for a substantial proportion of graduates with engineering diplomas and degrees

Proportion of women in the graduating class, selected institutes, 2009–2011

Institute	Women graduating as a percentage of all students			Total number of female graduates, 2009–2011
	2009	2010	2011	
Jigme Namgyel Polytechnic (Diplomas in civil, electrical, and mechanical engineering)	21.9%	28.4%	44.0%	89
College of Science and Technology (Bachelor of engineering, civil, and electrical)	22.0%	49.0%	52.5%	93

Source: Ministry of Labour and Human Resources, *Labour Market Information Bulletin*. For 2009: Tables 5.4, 5.5; 2010: Tables 3.4, 3.11; 2011: Table 5.8.

for the trades. However, one small insight may be gained from data on the trainees completing courses from the government's technical training institutes in 2011—women accounted for 39% of the 615 trainees completing courses, and they were almost all in what is often referred to as “nontraditional” fields for women—electrical or electronic skills, construction skills, and heavy vehicle driving.¹⁸ These are all skills that have been cited as being needed but in short supply.¹⁹

The technical training institute trainees tend to be younger people preparing to enter the labor market. Older rural women may also be a source of trainees to meet needs in skilled and construction trades. Rural women have few employment options and even fewer opportunities to learn new skills, as is evident in women's very high representation in the agricultural workforce and in the lowest grade of manual work in the National Work Force (workers employed by the government for projects or works executed directly by government agencies).²⁰

While literacy rates remain low in rural Bhutan, particularly among women, various initiatives have shown that the lack of literacy need not bar women (or men) from learning technical skills. This has been demonstrated in India by the Karmika School for Construction Workers, which has developed and tested

¹⁶ Druk Green Power Corporation. *Annual Report 2010*. p. 6; Bhutan Power Corporation. *Annual Report 2011*. p. 20 (sex-disaggregated information not provided).

¹⁷ Druk Green Power Corporation. 2011. *Nikachhu Hydropower Project: Environmental and Social Impact Assessment Report*. p. 121.

¹⁸ Ministry of Labour and Human Resources. *Labour Market Information Bulletin 2011*. p. 43.

¹⁹ Deloitte. 2012. *Formulation of National Employment Policy for Bhutan: Assessment Report*. Report prepared for the Ministry of Labour and Human Resources. p. 64.

²⁰ See chapter on transport.

Box 7. In India, Karmika School for Construction Workers has tested ways to train illiterate and semiliterate women in specialized construction skills

The Karmika School for Construction Workers was established in 2004 by the Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA), and shows that illiterate and semiliterate women can benefit from skills training and reach trade and certification standards set by country's Construction Industry Certification Council. The school

- provides a specialized, comprehensive 3-month training module that incorporates various skills needed in construction, such as masonry, painting, plastering, tiling, plumbing, carpentry, electric wiring, welding, roller operation, excavator operation, rubble masonry, bar bending, and laboratory technician training;
- also trains workers in short-term specialized skills such as construction of toilets, disaster-resistant houses, and other relevant local housing infrastructures such as drains, sewers, and landscaping;
- includes in its modules training in functional literacy skills and life skills such as conflict resolution and bargaining and negotiating with contractors and other employers;
- provides trainees with a daily stipend and travel costs;
- developed its program in partnership with the Construction Industry Development Council, the apex organization for the development of the construction sector;
- has developed links with private sector building firms for mutual benefit—serving builders' needs for a steady supply of skilled labor and providing women trainees with on-the-job training and skilled women with employment opportunities; and
- caters mostly to trainees who are illiterate or minimally literate (only 13% had more than 8 years of schooling)

Source: Baruah, Bipasha. 2010. Women and globalization: challenges and opportunities facing construction workers in contemporary India. *Development in Practice*. 20 (1): 31–44. See also www.sewahousing.org (under Activities).

training approaches to equipping illiterate and semiliterate women with skills in masonry, carpentry, welding, etc., and enabling them to achieve industry trade and certification standards (Box 7).

Another example from India is provided by the Barefoot College, which has successfully trained illiterate and semiliterate students in a range of areas, including technicians for solar installation and repair.²¹

Government Commitments to Support Women or Gender Equality in the Sector

While to date there are no sector-specific commitments to gender equality or to

equitable benefits for women in the energy sector, the government's emphasis on expanding access to modern energy is very favorable for women and gender equality.

Considerable emphasis has been placed on meeting the objective of electricity for all, as is evident in the acceleration of the initial target date of 2020 to 2017 and then 2013. Where households can be connected to the national grid, the costs are covered to the household meter connection (internal wiring is then up to the household). More remote households that are supplied with solar technology because of the difficulty in reaching them through the national grid have their costs fully covered (including solar panels, batteries, lights, and installation).²² The approach demonstrates a concern with ensuring affordability of connections; energy is also supplied to households at subsidized rates. As stated by the Economic Development Policy 2010, "Recognizing hydropower as a national resource, it shall be provided at affordable rates to reduce nonrenewable energy use."²³

Realizing that the appliances needed to make the shift to electricity may not be readily affordable, one government response has been to allow the duty-free import of appliances such as rice cookers, curry cookers, and water boilers (most of which are imported).²⁴

The Alternative Renewable Energy Policy, 2013 proposes the development of a range of energy-generation options (such as solar heaters, solar rooftop and stand-alone systems, wind systems, small hydro, and biogas). These could either complement grid-supplied energy or serve communities not connected. In both cases this would expand the potential to reduce the use of fuelwood, and would therefore benefit women. The policy also expresses some interest in improved cookstoves.²⁵

In addition, there are a number of policy commitments that are not specific to the energy sector but are relevant to it. One set of commitments that is particularly important

²¹ Various articles are available on the Barefoot College website: www.barefootcollege.org/sol_resources.asp

²² Information from Department of Renewable Energy, January 2012.

²³ Royal Government of Bhutan. *Economic Development Policy, 2010*, article 7.2.9.

²⁴ Department of Energy. 2009. *Overview of Energy Policies of Bhutan*. p.6.

²⁵ *Alternative Renewable Energy Policy 2013*. pp. 4, 17.

given the employment opportunities the energy sector is expected to generate is the prohibition against discrimination by sex in recruitment, training, wages, working conditions, and pay that is stated in the Labour and Employment Act of Bhutan, 2007. The commitments to women's entrepreneurship set out in the Cottage, Small and Medium Industries Policy, 2012 are also relevant.²⁶

Looking Forward: Issues and Opportunities to Consider

This section highlights a number of issues and opportunities that merit consideration as part of energy strategies currently under development.

► *Women as agents for household energy efficiency*

The Integrated Energy Management Master Plan recognized that reducing household fuelwood use would require high-efficiency cookstoves (as well as shifts to other energy sources). The plan recommended a longer-term commitment to the installation and use of improved cookstoves, and also highlighted the need to give specific attention to cookstoves used for fodder cooking.²⁷

Follow-up on these energy efficiency approaches could benefit from efforts to engage women. Given that women tend to devote much more time and energy to both cooking and hauling fuelwood, they have considerable interest in energy efficiency. Also, engaging women at the community level in reviewing options and strategies could help identify the range of household needs that must be met to enable households to reduce dependence on fuelwood. It appears, for example, that previous approaches have given too little attention to fuelwood use for fodder cooking or to the dual function of traditional stoves for cooking and space heating. Such requirements are more likely to be identified if consultations target the household members involved in supplying various household fuelwood needs.

► *Women's participation in energy-related livelihoods and entrepreneurship*

As modern and renewable energy services reach an increasing number of households, they will generate a range of new needs and entrepreneurial opportunities to meet those needs. This could include, for example, repair of small appliances; supply of parts for such repairs; maintenance services for solar and biogas systems; rental of appliances for short-term use; and management of new types of waste (such as broken or spent appliances, light bulbs).

Access to affordable energy also allows for livelihood and entrepreneurial activities that are based on or can be done more efficiently with energy-using technologies. This could include, for example, agroprocessing and laundry services.

Supporting rural women to take up these opportunities would align well with government commitments to develop the private sector and small enterprises, and to support women's entrepreneurship. Women are likely to benefit from information and ideas about the potential of new energy sources and technologies, which may not be obvious to those who have access to them for the first time. It would be important to ensure that women receive information about the possible uses of energy-based labor-saving technologies to produce marketable goods or services, and that they have equitable access to any related technical and business training. Also important is ensuring access to information about related small business development support (for finance and business management, marketing strategies, access to credit, etc.).

► *Women's participation as technicians, professionals, and managers in the energy sector*

The 11th plan envisages major new projects to expand hydropower capacity, develop renewable energy technologies, and strengthen the hydrometeorological network. Implementation of these plans will require additional workers in a wide range of technical, professional, and managerial fields, and will therefore necessitate efforts to make full use of the human resources available in

²⁶ See chapter on private sector development.

²⁷ Integrated Energy Management (footnote 1), pp. 20, 57–58.

Bhutan. Government strategies for enhanced human resource management in this growth area could include the following steps to promote greater participation of women in training and employment:

- develop information materials and activities on potential opportunities in the energy sector and target female students in tertiary and vocational education (and in the feeder levels) to promote awareness of career choices and the job market;
- develop links between energy sector employers and tertiary and vocational institutes to promote increased participation of women in studies relevant to the energy sector, including vocational training and apprenticeships as well as professional courses;
- collaborate with energy sector employers (energy corporations, hydropower projects and construction companies, government departments, etc.) and employer associations (such as the Bhutan Chamber of Commerce and Industry) to overcome preconceived ideas about hiring women in fields considered “nontraditional” for women.

Each of these strategies can contribute to the important task of changing set ideas held by the public and employers, and by women

and men, about the types of work that are possible and appropriate for women to do. Such approaches can increase opportunities for women and make them more able to contribute to the energy sector.

► ***Monitoring and targets for women’s participation in the sector***

The number of Bhutanese employed in the sector is one of the energy sector performance indicators identified in the 11th plan. Sex-disaggregated data on this indicator would provide additional information useful for policy. At a more detailed level, useful insights would be provided if sex-disaggregated information were collected on those benefiting from new jobs and entrepreneurial opportunities arising in relation to different types of initiatives in the sector and in any related training.

A step beyond monitoring would be to set targets for women’s participation. A target can be a useful means of stimulating or reinforcing change or progress when it is thoughtfully developed and backed up by a plan to reach it. It should be based on an assessment of the current situation, and should aim for a reasonable and achievable improvement, taking account of the context and the measures to be taken to support its achievement.

APPENDIX A. Tip Sheet on Integrating Gender Perspectives in Analysis and Planning in the Sector		
STEP 1: What are the positive outcomes for women or gender equality that could be achieved through gender mainstreaming?	STEP 2: What are some of the questions we should ask to better understand gender equality issues and women's needs in these areas?	STEP 3: What steps or strategies could be considered or adapted to move forward in these areas?
<p>Policy, planning, and decision making in the energy sector:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Increased awareness among decision makers about gender issues in energy → More detailed data and research on gender and energy to clarify issues and inform strategies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do women in poor households have access to the energy required for cooking, household chores, household-based enterprises? What are the key energy access problems (e.g., related to availability, reliability, costs, etc.)? • Do sector analyses and reforms consider the range of energy issues and needs at the household level, esp. energy sources for cooking and heating? • Do analyses factor in the benefits of improved household access to clean cooking fuels or improved stoves on greenhouse emission, improved health of household members, and reduced workloads for women? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review information available on household needs and how they are met through existing data sources and surveys (e.g., Renewable Natural Resources Census, Bhutan Living Standards Survey). • Consider whether a special study would be helpful in determining what should be monitored on a regular basis in surveys such as those above. • Ensure that consultation processes in the sector (on policies, proposed initiatives, etc.) seek the views of women. • Consult with women's advocacy organizations about women's energy needs. • Explore options for investment in and use of improved cookstoves.
<p>Improved energy supply at household level:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Decreased workloads due reduced need for fuel and fuelwood collection → Decreased workloads associated with increased use of labor-saving technologies in the household 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the increased supply serve the range of energy needs (e.g., is the type of modern energy supplied applicable and affordable for cooking and heating as well as lighting)? • To what extent are rural households using energy-based tools or technologies for domestic tasks (e.g., water heaters, curry cookers, washing machines)? What distinguishes households that do or do not? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For communities and households where modern energy is insufficient or too costly to extend to major household uses, explore the potential of alternatives such as biogas to reduce the need for households to rely on fuelwood for cooking and heating. • Explore options for investment in and use of improved cookstoves. • Ensure that women as well as men are reached with information about energy-based tools and technologies (in all households, not only households headed by women).
<p>New market opportunities and businesses in the energy sector, particularly renewable and clean energy technologies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Increased participation of women as entrepreneurs and service providers in the energy sector 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the opportunities and constraints facing women in relation to small-scale enterprises providing energy products or services? • Are women being targeted for demonstrations of new technologies and business models for renewable energy? • Can women be encouraged and supported to take a greater role as owners or operators of enterprises offering energy products and services? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Target women, women's organizations, and enterprises as possible producers and suppliers of energy products. • Consider the potential to involve women's enterprises or self-help groups as franchisees for management tasks such as meter reading, billing, and consumer information. • Distribute information to women that helps generate ideas about entrepreneurial possibilities related to energy.

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<p>Entrepreneurship using new and improved energy supply (conventional or renewable):</p> <p>→ More efficient and profitable women's enterprises due to use of new energy supply</p>	<p>• In communities recently linked to energy services, how will current and prospective entrepreneurs learn about uses of these services and the new technologies they support? Will these mechanisms reach women (taking account of factors such as literacy, access to media, etc.)?</p> <p>• What are the strengths and constraints experienced by women in following up on such opportunities?</p>	<p>• Develop public awareness activities that will reach women across barriers identified (e.g., through peer networks, community outreach)</p> <p>• Partner with nongovernment organizations to develop programs to inform and train women about the use of labor-saving energy technologies and provide related entrepreneurship support (management and marketing strategies, access to credit).</p>
<p>Public awareness of energy efficiency and conservation, and improved household practices:</p> <p>→ Women empowered as change agents</p> <p>→ Reduced reliance of rural households on traditional biomass fuels</p>	<p>• What are the choices available to poor women and poor households for clean energy and technologies (for cooking, grinding grains, etc.)?</p> <p>• Are women informed about energy efficiency, conservation, and greenhouse gas issues? Where do they get their information from? Do awareness and information sources differ for women and men?</p>	<p>• Explore measures to increase access to clean energy sources and efficient nonpolluting technologies.</p> <p>• Target women and women's organizations for information and awareness campaigns, and as participants in delivering public information campaigns about household conservation and efficiency practices.</p>
<p>Employment policies and practices in energy sector institutions:</p> <p>→ More equitable employment opportunities for women</p>	<p>• What is the representation of women on the staff of public sector energy agencies and in energy corporations? Are women represented in management as well as at lower levels? Have there been any initiatives to identify reasons for low participation?</p> <p>• Are there opportunities to support greater participation by women at professional, technical, and decision-making levels?</p>	<p>• Promote formal adoption of equal opportunities policies (for recruitment, promotion, training, and working conditions).</p> <p>• Strengthen links between energy sector partners and vocational and professional training institutes to support increased access to training as well as follow-up employment for women.</p>
<p>Temporary employment arising through project construction work:</p> <p>→ Equitable access by women to temporary project jobs, in management and professional levels, and in the construction trades</p> <p>→ Better recognition of women's rights to equal pay and appropriate working conditions</p>	<p>• Are women active in the construction sector in the project area? What skill and pay levels are they, and how does this compare to men?</p> <p>• Are workers and employers or contractors aware of core labor standards and workers' rights, including women's rights to nondiscrimination and equal pay?</p>	<p>• Set targets for women's participation at different skill levels that are meaningful and achievable (given labor supply, local conditions, etc.).</p> <p>• Hold briefing sessions for contractors to advise them of their responsibilities for equitable pay and working conditions, and assist them in achieving and monitoring this.</p>
<p>Resettlement of those displaced by new infrastructure:</p> <p>→ Restoration of livelihoods and income of both women and men</p> <p>→ Land and compensation in resettlement is in the names of both women and men (in households headed by men as well as households headed by women)</p>	<p>• What will be the impacts of displacement and/or resettlement on women's livelihoods? Can previous livelihoods be reestablished and be viable? Is retraining required? What other services have been disrupted (e.g., child care and schooling)?</p> <p>• Are there barriers to women's participation in consultation processes (e.g., related to transport availability or costs, household duties, and local social mores)? How can these be overcome?</p>	<p>• Develop a consultation strategy that reaches women in various types of households (households headed by women, widows, married women, and single women).</p> <p>• Develop and fund a plan to facilitate reestablishment of livelihoods (responding to findings of analysis of needs).</p>

APPENDIX B. Useful Resources for Gender Analysis in the Sector

Bhutan-based background information and gender-specific resources

Useful sector overviews and background documents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ministry of Economic Affairs. 2010. <i>Integrated Energy Management Master Plan for Bhutan</i>. www.nec.gov.bt/nec1/wp-content/uploads/2012/11/EnergyMasterPlan2010.pdf Asian Development Bank. 2010. <i>Asian Development Bank's Assistance for Rural Electrification in Bhutan—Does Electrification Improve Quality of Rural Life?</i> Manila (Impact Evaluation Study: BHU 2010-27). www.adb.org/documents/adb-assistance-rural-electrification-bhutan-does-electrification-improve-quality-rural-life
Relevant legislation, policy statements, and strategy papers (other than five-year plans)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Economic Development Policy 2010</i>. www.gnhc.gov.bt/wp-content/uploads/2012/04/EDP.pdf <i>Alternative Renewable Energy Policy 2013</i>. www.moea.gov.bt/documents/files/pub0ip10496bv.pdf In preparation: policy on energy efficiency (demand side). <p>Other policies or legislation not specific to energy but relevant to the sector:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Labour and Employment Act of Bhutan, 2007</i>. www.molhr.gov.bt/publication/labouract.pdf <i>Cottage, Small and Medium Industry Policy, 2012</i>. www.gnhc.gov.bt/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/CSMI-Policy-2012.pdf
Research and analyses on gender and energy in Bhutan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). 2011. Augmenting Gross National Happiness in a Remote Bhutan Community: Community-Based Micro-Hydro for Livelihoods Enhancement. Energy Access Case Study 13. One of a set of case studies prepared in conjunction with the report <i>Towards an "Energy Plus" Approach for the Poor: A Review of Good Practices and Lessons Learned from Asia and the Pacific</i>. www.snap-undp.org/elibrary/Publication.aspx?ID=600 D. Palit and S. Garud. 2010. Energy Consumption in the Residential Sector in the Himalaya Kingdom of Bhutan. <i>Boiling Point</i>. 58. pp. 34–36. www.hedon.info/View+Article?itemId=10204
Other resources	
Other research and articles on gender and energy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For a repository on articles and resources on gender and energy, see www.energia.org Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD). 2011. <i>Gender Equality in Financing Energy for All: Gender-Responsive Energy Financing Can Contribute to Basic Human Rights and Economic Efficiency</i>. Paper developed by NORAD's gender team in cooperation with ETC/ENERGIA and Nord/Sør-konsulentene consortium. www.norad.no/_attachment/384007/binary/211409?download=true G. Kohlin et al. 2011. Energy, Gender and Development: What are the Linkages? Where is the Evidence? <i>World Bank Policy Research Working Paper</i>. 5800. http://go.worldbank.org/F2U15Y76T0 K. Dhanapala. 1998. Beyond Project Boundaries, Improving Gender Impacts of Village Micro Hydro Systems. <i>Energia News</i>. 2 (3). pp. 12–14. www.energia.org/knowledge-centre/energia-news/energianews0898/en0898dhanapala UNDP. 2007. <i>Will tomorrow be brighter than today? Addressing gender concerns in energy for poverty reduction in the Asia-Pacific region</i>. Regional Energy Programme for Poverty Reduction, UNDP Regional Centre, Bangkok. regionalcentrebangkok.undp.or.th/practices/energy_env/rep-por/documents/Gender_and_Energy.pdf J. Clancy and S. Dutta. 2005. Women and Productive Uses of Energy: Some light on a shadowy area. Paper presented at the UNDP Meeting on Productive Uses of Renewable Energy, Bangkok, Thailand, May 2005. www.energia.org/fileadmin/files/media/reports/DropBox/dutta_clancy_productive_use.pdf S. Tsephel et al. 2009. Why perfect stoves are not always chosen: a new approach for understanding stove and fuel choice at the household level. <i>Boiling Point</i>. 57. pp. 6–8. www.hedon.info/docs/BP57_LambeEtAl.pdf
Guides and case studies on gender and energy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Asian Development Bank. 2012. <i>Gender Tool Kit: Energy: Going Beyond the Meter</i>. www.adb.org/documents/gender-tool-kit-energy-going-beyond-meter World Bank. 2010. Making Infrastructure Work for Women and Men: A Portfolio Review of World Bank Infrastructure Projects 1995–2009. www-esd.worldbank.org/gapdatabase/index.cfm?Page=Search&RecordID=305&csr=1

Toward Gender-Equitable Opportunities and Outcomes:

Environment

Summary	
Sector context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conservation and sustainable environmental management constitutes one of the four pillars of the gross national happiness framework that guides national planning. • Bhutan's forests and biodiversity are significant assets. • Environmental hazards include earthquakes and landslides. • Potential climate change impacts include increased risk of glacial lake outburst floods, changing rainfall and weather patterns, unpredictable agricultural conditions, and reduced water flow constraining hydropower production.
Gender equality issues relevant to sector activities and outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insights of women and men into climate change impacts may differ due to gender differences in activities. • Women have interests in water resource management for households but also for crops and livestock. • Adaptation measures related to farming practices require women's participation to be effective. • Women's informed participation is also important in the management of parks and protected areas. • To date there has been limited attention to the gender dimensions of biodiversity management. • Women are involved in community forestry, but there is little information about how they participate or benefit. • Effective disaster risk reduction requires outreach to women.
Government commitments to support women or gender equality in the sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There has been limited attention to date on the gender dimensions of climate change impacts or adaptation. • A commitment has been made to women's participation in disaster management committees at all levels.
Looking forward: issues and opportunities to consider	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women are not just a vulnerable group, but vital partners in environmental management • Adequacy of sex-disaggregated data on activities and interests related to agriculture, forestry, and biodiversity management • Women's participation in water and waste management • Gender and payment for ecosystem services
Appendixes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tip Sheet on Integrating Gender Perspectives in the Sector • Useful Resources for Gender Analysis in the Sector

Sector Context

Bhutan places a high value on the protection of the environment. Conservation and sustainable environmental management is one of the four pillars of the gross national happiness concept that guides the country's development and provides the planning framework for the Eleventh Five-Year Plan. Accordingly, environmental sustainability is a major consideration in specifying key results in all sectors for the plan.¹

With its extensive forest cover—currently about 72% of the country, and required by the constitution to be at least 60% in perpetuity—and limited polluting industries, Bhutan is one of very few countries to be a net sink (rather than contributor) to greenhouse gas emissions.² Although Bhutan is small in area, it includes ecosystems ranging from subtropical forests and grasslands in the southern foothills to temperate forests in the central mountains and alpine meadows in the north. These varied habitats allow for a rich diversity of plant and animal life.³ Bhutan's forests and biodiversity are significant assets.

It is also a region vulnerable to natural hazards. Bhutan is in a seismically active zone where the earthquake risk is high. An earthquake in 2009 centered in Mongar in the east had a magnitude of 6.1; it took 12 lives and affected some 7,000 people. Landslides are a recurrent risk, particularly in areas of steep terrain and during heavy rainfall. Other hazards include monsoon flash floods, droughts, windstorms, and forest fires.⁴

Bhutan's location and terrain also makes it highly vulnerable to climate change. Warming trends are thought to be higher in mountainous regions, and the impacts of warming are magnified by sudden changes of altitude over

short distances.⁵ Glacial melting has increased the risk of glacial lake outburst floods in high mountain areas above the valleys in which most of the human settlements are located. Higher temperatures can change the potential range of different plant, animal, and insect species. Erratic rainfall patterns increase the risk of floods, soil erosion, and landslides, but also of seasonal water shortages and droughts.

Both climate change and natural hazards have significant potential impacts on the economy and on livelihoods. In the hydropower sector, which is the major driver of Bhutan's economic growth, hydropower plants are all the “run-of-the-river” type and thus particularly susceptible to changes in water flows. The availability of water resources will also be a critical concern in agriculture, another vital sector as some 70% of households depend at least in part on crops, livestock, and forest products for subsistence and income. In addition to reduced water resources for rainfed crops and reduced crop productivity, climate change impacts could include the loss of arable land (already in short supply), accelerated soil degradation and loss of soil fertility, and greater pest and disease outbreaks.⁶

Leadership in assessing and managing environmental concerns is provided by the National Environment Commission, which is chaired by the Prime Minister and includes senior ministers as commissioners. The commission is supported by a secretariat that has divisions with responsibilities for climate change, water resources coordination, and compliance monitoring. The commission's membership reflects the importance of multisectoral participation in responding to climate change. An interministerial approach was also undertaken in preparing a framework to guide local governments to mainstream gender and other issues into their part of the 11th plan.⁷

¹ Gross National Happiness Commission. 2013. *Eleventh Five-Year Plan, 2013–2018*. p. 117 and sectoral plans.

² Royal Government of Bhutan. 2012. *Bhutan: In Pursuit of Sustainable Development*. National Report for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development 2012. pp. 2–3.

³ Royal Government of Bhutan. 2011. *National Action Plan: Biodiversity Persistence and Climate Change*. National paper for Climate Summit for Living Himalayas. p. 4.

⁴ Gross National Happiness Commission. 2011. *Eleventh Round Table Meeting. Turning Vision into Reality: the Development Challenges Confronting Bhutan*.

⁵ Gross National Happiness Commission and United Nations Development Programme. 2011. *Bhutan National Human Development Report 2011. Sustaining progress: Rising to the climate challenge*. p. 13.

⁶ Eleventh Round Table (footnote 4), pp. 21, 57.

⁷ Gross National Happiness Commission. 2013. *Framework to Mainstream Gender, Environment, Climate Change, Disaster Risk Reduction and Poverty (GECDP) into the 11 FYP of the Local Governments*.

At the local level, the extension service centers and officers of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forests have a key role in assisting the rural population to adapt to changes in the resources on which they depend, and to increase their resilience and livelihood options. Also important are the local government leaders, both of *Dzongkhags* (district) and *Gewogs* (county, the lowest tier), who prepare local development plans.

Strategies and action plans developed in recent years are evidence of efforts to better understand and manage change. These include the Bhutan National Adaptation Plan of Action, 2006 (updated 2012); the National Action Program to Combat Land Degradation, 2009; and the National Action Plan: Biodiversity Persistence and Climate Change, 2011.⁸

A related set of strategies focuses on disaster risk reduction. The recently approved Disaster Management Act, 2013 provides for a national disaster management authority chaired by the Prime Minister and including several senior ministers and the secretaries of all ministries. The authority's function will be to provide leadership in policy and planning and to lead the response when disasters occur. The authority will be supported by the Department of Disaster Management of the Ministry of Home and Cultural Affairs.

Disaster management committees are also to be set up in each Dzongkhag, headed by the *dzongdag* (district administrator) and including all elected heads of *Gewogs* and towns as well as relevant officials. All local governments are further directed by the act to mainstream disaster risk reduction into their development plans and activities.

Gender Equality Issues Relevant to Sector Activities and Outcomes

► *Insights of women and men into climate change impacts and risks may differ*

Inquiries into the views of local communities about climate-related changes and hazards

generally do not distinguish between the views of women and men. For example, one study of climate change challenges included focus group discussions with local communities in north-central Bhutan. Hazards identified through the focus groups were erratic rainfall, landslides, hailstorms, livestock disease, and crop disease, and the importance of each risk was rated in relation to its impact on the most important livelihoods, which in this area included agriculture, livestock, cordyceps (medicinal mushrooms), construction wage labor, tourism, and portage. Both women and men were included in the discussions, but no comment was made on whether they had similar views about the risks or the ranking of risks in relation to livelihoods.⁹

While women and men could have similar views, their views could also differ due to gender differences in economic and household activities. More women than men are now involved in agriculture; for example, while construction wage labor and portage tend to be male-dominated activities. Women also have a larger role than men in fodder collection and household water management. A Food and Agriculture Organization study that draws on experience in India argues that such differences affect the way women and men each experience climate change and advocates attention to differences in views to ensure that the needs and priorities of both women and men are addressed.¹⁰

► *Women have interests in water resource management for households but also for crops and livestock*

Issues related to water were highlighted throughout the 11th plan, including problems of water management, scarcity and erratic supply in urban centers and other settlements, and shortages in rural areas and for agriculture.¹¹

Data on women and water resource management are not available for Bhutan. However, given

⁸ Appendix B to this chapter provides access information for these and related documents.

⁹ P. Llendup. 2012. Integration of Climate Adaptation into Development and Conservation Planning in Bhutan: Issue Identification and Recommendations. *Adaptation Knowledge Platform, Partner Report Series*. No. 1. Stockholm Environment Institute, Bangkok.

¹⁰ Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. 2010. *Farmers in a Changing Climate: Does Gender Matter? Food Security in Andhra Pradesh, India*. Rome. pp. 24–28.

¹¹ 11th plan (footnote 1), pp. 10, 74–75, 152, 155.

the importance of water to household tasks generally performed by women, particularly cooking but also household hygiene, laundry, care of children and the ill, water availability and quality are clearly matters of concern for both rural and urban women. The impact of water shortages on women's workloads was also highlighted as an issue in a guide for planning by local governments.¹²

Women also have interests in water availability in relation to crops and livestock, given their predominance in the agricultural sector discussed under the next heading.

The Water Act, 2011 gives an important role to water users' associations for managing water resources.¹³ However, it includes no requirements or guidance on women's participation in these associations. The only data available on membership suggest that few women participate (most participants are heads of household, and few of the total are women heads of household).¹⁴ Women's participation is an issue related to equitable and appropriate water management but also because of the argument in the 11th plan that water users' associations (along with road users' associations) are "effective means of strengthening democracy and governance at community levels."¹⁵

► ***Adaptation measures related to farming practices require women's participation to be effective***

Data from the Labour Force Survey show the extent to which women now predominate in agriculture and farming: in 2012, the rural agricultural labor force consisted of 112,340 women and 73,131 men (with another 10,700 women and 1,500 men in agricultural activities in urban areas).¹⁶ A recent sector analysis highlighted the role of increased labor force participation by women in maintaining the agricultural labor force despite the extent of rural–urban migration.¹⁷

Given the high representation of women, adaptive measures are unlikely to achieve widespread implementation unless women are fully engaged. Many of the adaptive measures under consideration by the government depend on farmers' access to information for follow-up. These include, for example, changes in farm practices to promote soil moisture retention, adoption of new crop varieties tolerant to temperature and moisture stress, diversification of crops and livestock varieties to reduce vulnerability, adoption of on-farm water-efficient technologies, and responsiveness to messages from early warning systems and weather forecast mechanisms about weather events.¹⁸

Limited information is available on the extent to which women farmers are targeted and reached with extension services and information about crops, livestock, and water management, or whether efforts have been made to identify and address factors limiting follow-up by women on advice given. Factors affecting follow-up could include access to resources (financial, technology, labor, etc.), which differs between women and men.¹⁹

► ***Women's informed participation is also important in the management of parks and protected areas***

Forests are important in various ways to the livelihood strategies of rural communities: they are a source of timber for house building, fuelwood for cooking and heating, fodder for livestock, and leaf litter for animal bedding and soil amendment, and also as a source of nonwood products for food, medical use, and crafts.

Some 72% of the country is forested. About 51% of the country has been designated as protected areas.²⁰ Protected areas include 10 parks or wildlife sanctuaries, many of which continue to have local communities living within them. Protected status is intended to conserve forests and provide for wildlife habitats; accordingly, access to forest resources within these areas is regulated with these objectives placed foremost. However,

¹² GECDP Framework (footnote 7).

¹³ Royal Government of Bhutan. *Water Act of Bhutan, 2011*. Chapter 11.

¹⁴ National Statistics Bureau. 2013. *Bhutan Living Standards Survey 2012 Report*. (BLSS 2012). Table A3.90 (p. 155) and Figure 10.6 (p. 79).

¹⁵ 11th plan (footnote 1), p. 76

¹⁶ Ministry of Labour and Human Resources. *Labour Force Survey Report, 2012*. Tables 3.1, 3.2 (pp. 37–38).

¹⁷ Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and World Bank. 2012. *Bhutan Agriculture*

Sector Review: Vol. 1. Issues, Institutions, Policies. Rome.

¹⁸ Eleventh Round Table (footnote 4), pp. 58–59.

¹⁹ See also chapter on agriculture and rural livelihoods.

²⁰ Ministry of Agriculture and Forests, Department of Forests and Park Services. www.dofps.gov.bt

one of the consequences of the increased protection of forests and wildlife has been an increase in the risk faced by those living and farming within protected areas or nearby to dangers and crop damage from the expanding wildlife population.²¹

The increase in the scale of protected areas has occurred rapidly, and one of the challenges in managing them to achieve conservation objectives is to gain the support of the local populations who are dependent on forest resources and who live in close proximity to them. A 2011 study that claimed to be the first to look at perceptions of protected areas focused on the residents of a major park that covers 1,732 kilometers and includes 31 villages within its bounds.²² The study found that men were more likely than women to be convinced of the importance of the park for the protection of forests and wildlife. The authors attributed this to men having more time and opportunities for social interaction and acquiring information. Another factor could have been women's greater reliance than men on forest resources, given their household responsibilities in relation to fuelwood and fodder collection and also livelihood interests in other forest products. The study observed that voluntary compliance was less forthcoming among those who perceived the park primarily as a constraint on livelihoods. In short, improved communications, better recognition of traditional resources management, and a focus on women were among the strategies recommended for effective management of protected areas.

► ***To date there has been limited attention to the gender dimensions of biodiversity management***

Management of biodiversity resources, including both traditional and current practices, is a relatively new field of inquiry in Bhutan, and there has been little attention

to date to gender differences in practices and knowledge related to biodiversity.

A recent study on gender and biodiversity management that drew on international literature and research in the Himalayas argued that attention to women's gender-specific knowledge, access to resources, and decisions related to biodiversity were central to achieving sustainable development and biodiversity conservation.²³ This claim was based on findings that

- women are crucial actors in their multiple roles as farmers, herders, forest gatherers, primary health care givers, food processors, herbalists, market vendors, collectors and cultivators of indigenous vegetables, selectors and preservers of seeds, etc.;
- women have more varietal selection criteria than men because of the many ways they use plant materials;
- women's knowledge of the quality of landraces (locally adapted plant and animal species) and of the multiple uses of medicinal, herbal, and aromatic plants is a crucial factor in sustaining these species on farms and in fields;
- women have tremendous knowledge of the medicinal and nutritional value of diverse plant species, and in many contexts are more familiar than men with the medicinal value of local flora; and
- women's roles in seed management—including seed selection, processing, storage, and exchange—contribute to conserving biodiversity in farms and home gardens.

► ***Women are involved in community forestry, but there is little information about how they participate or benefit***

The first community forest was established in Bhutan in 1997, and the number of such forests increased steadily, reaching 100 in 2008. Since then, the numbers have increased even more rapidly, and by 2013 there were 400 community forests and 22,257

²¹ D. Penjore. 2008. Is National Environment Conservation Success a Rural Failure? The Other Side of Bhutan's Conservation Story. *Towards global transformation: proceedings of the Third International Conference on Gross National Happiness*. Thimphu: Centre for Bhutan Studies.

²² O. Katel and D. Schmidt-Vogt. 2011. Use of Forest Resources by Residents of Jigme Singye Wangchuk National Park, Bhutan. *Mountain Research and Development*. 31(4). pp. 325–333.

²³ M. Khadka and R. Verma. 2012. Gender and Biodiversity: Overview of an Emerging Field of Research. In M. Khadka and R. Verma, eds. 2012. *Gender and Biodiversity Management in the Greater Himalayas: Towards Equitable Mountain Development*. Kathmandu: International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development. pp. 8–9.

participating households. In total, 2% of the forest area in Bhutan is now managed through this approach.²⁴

Community forestry is intended to result in socioeconomic benefits while empowering local communities to manage for sustainability. One study of six community forests that aimed to identify contributions to poverty reduction found that most current activities related to subsistence uses, mostly harvesting of timber, poles, and posts. When asked for ideas for further activities, focus groups of poor women and men showed an interest in going beyond subsistence to commercialize forest products and start small enterprises to generate cash income and employment. Men suggested activities such as planting and marketing bamboo, using a stone quarry, and starting a furniture enterprise. Women suggested collecting medicinal plants, ferns, and wild asparagus; and doing weaving.²⁵ These ideas seem to echo an existing division of labor (and associated knowledge and skills). For both women and men, restraints on moving forward included lack of start-up funds and lack of knowledge about processing and marketing forest produce. The study recommended capacity-building on group governance and for processing and marketing. It also suggested the formation of subgroups for activities such as furniture making, handicraft production, and medicinal plant production, to enable poorer members of the forest management groups to participate in income-generating activities and eventually employment. Such an approach could also benefit women, who have fewer opportunities than men in rural Bhutan to earn income.

The 2012 Bhutan Living Standards Survey found that households were more likely to belong to community forest groups than any other type of group (spiritual, welfare, water user, agriculture, dairy, etc.). About 25% of households that belonged to a group of

some kind belonged to a community forest group.²⁶ Unfortunately, it is not possible to determine from the data whether women or men were the household members most active in these groups. There is very limited information elsewhere on this point. A study of community forest management groups in Punakha Dzongkhag looked at the participation of women in the executive committees and training, but not in the membership as such (perhaps because membership is by household). It found that more men than women were executive committee members in 17 of the 18 groups studied, and women accounted for only 24% of all executive committee members. There were also more men than women in trainings, study tours, and workshops.²⁷

► ***Disaster risk reduction approaches and information should reach women as well as men***

A number of gender-based factors can increase disaster risk for women and girls. For example, women's family responsibilities become more difficult to manage when disaster strikes and water, food, fuel, and shelter become scarce. Other factors increasing risk derive from limited access to resources, including literacy, information, and time, which also increase the challenge of coping with disasters.²⁸

One of the concerns related to disaster risk and response discussed at the 2012 Bhutan+10 Conference on Gender and Sustainable Mountain Development was that, despite the responsibilities carried by women in rural areas and the added workload resulting from male out-migration, women often remain dependent on male household members for receiving information on disaster risk preparedness and evacuation.²⁹ In Bhutan, the

²⁴ Announcement dated 17 May 2013 on website of the Department of Forests and Park Services. www.dofps.gov.bt/node/466

²⁵ T. Samdrup. 2011. Improving the Contribution of Community Forestry to Poverty Reduction in Bhutan. In S. Phuntsho et al. *Community Forestry in Bhutan: Putting People at the Heart of Poverty Reduction*. Thimphu: Ugyen Wangchuk Institute for Conservation and Environment and Social Forestry Division of Ministry of Agriculture and Forests.

²⁶ BLSS 2012 (footnote 14), p.76.

²⁷ T. Wangchuk. 2011. Analysing Governance of Community Forestry in Bhutan: A Case Study from Punakha Dzongkhag. In S. Phuntsho et al. *Community Forestry in Bhutan: Putting People at the Heart of Poverty Reduction*. Thimphu: Ugyen Wangchuk Institute for Conservation and Environment and Social Forestry Division of Ministry of Agriculture and Forests. pp. 44–45.

²⁸ E. Enarson et al. 2003. *Working with Women at Risk. Practical Guidelines for Assessing Local Disaster Risk*. Miami: International Hurricane Center.

²⁹ M. Shrestha et al. 2012. Regional Flood Information System in the Hindu Kush Himalayas (HKH-HYCOS) with a Gender Perspective. International

early warning system for glacial lake outburst floods is a set of sirens designed to be heard over the total area at risk, which suggests that women would not be dependent on men if they had participated in information and awareness sessions on the meaning of the siren signals and how they should respond. Information and warnings delivered through text messages or media would be less likely to be effective.

Government Commitments to Support Women or Gender Equality in the Sector

To date, there has been very limited attention to the gender dimensions of climate change, conservation, or resource management in analytic overviews or strategies, including the 2006 National Adaptation Programme of Action and its 2012 update, the 2011 National Action Plan on Biodiversity Persistence and Climate Change, and the Bhutan national report for the 2012 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development.³⁰

Many of the adaptation activities outlined in the 2012 update to the National Adaptation Programme of Action would need to be pursued with the support of the existing extension services for agriculture, livestock, and forests. Ongoing efforts by the government to decentralize services and extend the network of extension centers are likely to make such services more accessible to women as well as men. This is important given women's involvement in agriculture, livestock, and forests and the time constraints that would make more distant services difficult to access. However, there are as yet no explicit strategies to ensure that women are reached and served by extension services, or to monitor whether women have equitable access.

Regarding disaster management, clause 130 of the Disaster Management Act, 2013 specifies that “due care shall be taken to ensure that

women are adequately represented on Disaster Management Committees established” under the act. This reflects an awareness of the importance and value of including women in planning and decision making, but is likely to require some special efforts as the formal disaster management committees at the *Dzongkhag* level are largely comprised of elected officials and senior civil servants, which are groups that currently include few women.

Looking Forward: Issues and Opportunities to Consider

This section highlights a number of issues and opportunities that merit consideration as part of strategies being developed in relation to environmental protection, climate change, and disaster risk management.

► ***Women are not just a vulnerable group, but vital partners in environmental management***

Many documents highlight the ways in which women are particularly at risk from the negative impacts of climate change and environment-related disasters on the resources required for subsistence. However, this is only half the story. Women are also important economic and community actors, with interests and knowledge that need to be taken into account to effectively pursue conservation and sustainable environmental management.

Box 1 outlines some indicators to assess whether a strategy or management plan for climate change adaptation or disaster risk management has mainstreamed gender equality concerns. Just mentioning women (somewhere in a list of those at risk) or referring to women only as a vulnerable group are indications that not enough attention has been paid to women's economic activities, interests, and knowledge.

Recognizing and supporting women's contributions to household and community livelihoods is an important element of strategies to build household and community resilience to environmental events.

Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD). PowerPoint summary of presentation to the Bhutan+10 Conference.

³⁰ See Appendix B for full citations and access information for these documents.

► ***Sex-disaggregated data on activities and interests related to agriculture, forestry, and biodiversity management***

Very limited data are available for many of the issues raised in this chapter. As highlighted in the chapter on agriculture and rural livelihoods, most data on agricultural producers are based on the household and provide no insights into the division of labor between women and men, or about who produces which outputs, or how outputs and incomes are shared among household members. Similarly, there is little information by sex on the use of forests and forest products for rural livelihoods or about participation in community forestry.

These information gaps mean that situation analyses and policies based on them use undifferentiated categories—“farmers,” “household members,” or “community members”—that mask differences within these groups that may have significant impacts on the effectiveness of the strategies identified or the appropriateness of targeting.

► ***Women’s participation in water and waste management***

As was noted above, women’s participation in water users’ associations seems very limited compared with their activities and interests in water availability and quality for both household and agricultural uses. The opportunity to address this issue now seems greater with the 11th plan’s emphasis on addressing water issues and on the potential of water users’ associations as a means to strengthen democratic processes.

Another area in which women can potentially make important contributions is household waste management. This is again a subject for which little information exists, but given women’s household tasks, they are clearly an important target group and participant in measures to cope more effectively with increasing quantities of domestic waste, including separation of wastes, composting, and collection and use of recyclables.

► ***Payment for ecosystem services***

Some initial discussion and experimentation with payment for ecosystem services (PES) has been undertaken in Bhutan, but to date

Box 1. What are indicators to assess whether a strategy or management plan for climate change adaptation or disaster risk management has mainstreamed gender equality concerns?

Indications that a gender equality perspective *has* been mainstreamed:

- The background information or analysis disaggregates women’s and men’s interests, work, responsibilities, and needs and this is also reflected in the actions outlined.
- Women have been consulted and these consultations have influenced the setting of priorities.
- It is clearly understood that “farmers” include both women and men, and that male and female farmers may differ in workloads and priorities.
- It is clearly understood that “households” also include males and females with different interests and priorities, and that not all members benefit equally from resources made available to households.
- There is a clear aim to ensure that women and men are both to be the targets and participants in awareness raising and planning, and in preparedness and recovery.

Indications that gender equality *has not* been taken into account:

- Women are referred to only as a “vulnerable group.”
- References to women are generally part of a list such as “children, youth, women, the elderly, persons with disabilities.”
- The analysis and actions assume that all household members have the same interests and needs.
- The document includes a small section on “women” or “gender” but the main analysis and action program omits those points.
- The document includes a statement that “gender will be mainstreamed in all actions taken.”

Source: Adapted from Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency. 1997. *Overview: Gender Equality and Emergency Assistance/Conflict Resolution*. Stockholm.

this has not included discussion of the gender dimensions.³¹

There are many forms or approaches to PES. Community forestry could be seen as a form of PES as it enables communities to use forest resources in return for their implementation of sustainable management approaches. PES approaches could also include compensation to farmers and forest users for livelihood losses related to the establishment of protected areas (less access to forest

³¹ This section is based on examples provided in B. Neves and D. Vallee. 2009. *Payments for Environmental Services (PES): Opportunities in Bhutan. Feasibility Assessment*. Prepared in cooperation with the Management Division, Department of Forests, Thimphu.

**Box 2. Extracts from the Conference Declaration of Bhutan+10:
Gender and Sustainable Mountain Development in a
Changing World, October 2012, Thimphu**

We call for:

- A better integration of mountain perspectives in sectoral, local, national, regional, and international development agendas;
- The systematic strengthening of gender perspectives and indigenous knowledge in all mountain development policies, strategies, and programmes and in national and regional organizations working on mountain development;
- Allocation of sufficient human and financial resources to promote women scientists working on mountain issues and those from mountain regions, to enhance their leadership skills, and to meet their networking needs; to institutionalize gender disaggregated data and analysis; and to ensure that mountain development actions are gender responsive and sensitive, thereby addressing gender issues in the mountains;
- Affirmative action and strengthening of local governance bodies to support inclusive and integrated mountain development which would fulfill the needs of both women and men on an equal basis;
- Technical assistance of regional and international organizations to mountain countries to support the development of interdisciplinary knowledge for mountain development and gender-responsive strategies;
- Recognition of women's strengths, knowledge, and capacities in adapting to climate change and emphasis on women's social capital;
- Action to make the results of research available to mountain women in language that is accessible and relevant to ensure impacts;
- Investment in technologies, infrastructure, and institutional strengthening that are responsive to gender-specific needs, reduce women's workloads, improve their leadership skills and access to information, break their isolation and exclusion from economic and governance bodies, support girls' education, and increase their access to basic services, financial resources, and markets;
- Promote the Gross National Happiness of women and men in mountain countries.

Source: Bhutan+10: International Conference on Gender and Mountain Development in a Changing World. Conference Declaration. www.icimod.org/bhutan+10

resources, more crop damage by wildlife), recognizing that they are paying the costs of the broader good of maintaining forest cover and biodiversity, and are also maintaining the watersheds required for hydropower and the landscapes on which tourism thrives. Another form of PES could be through relationships between upstream and downstream users of watersheds, in which upstream users derive benefits from adopting sustainable practices in farming and livestock grazing that protect against degradation through erosion, overgrazing, etc.

In each of these cases, an important gender equality concern is to ensure that women are not overlooked in the identification of providers of the environmental services, targets for information, participants in negotiations, and recipients of payments. To date, approaches seem to focus on households or communities, with no further consideration about which household or community members will undertake the activities in question and thus would be the most appropriate targets for involvement.

APPENDIX A. Tip Sheet on Integrating Gender Perspectives in Analysis and Planning in the Sector		
STEP 1: What are the positive outcomes for women or gender equality that could be achieved through gender mainstreaming?	STEP 2: What are some of the questions we should ask to better understand gender equality issues and women's needs in these areas?	STEP 3: What steps or strategies could be considered or adapted to move forward in these areas?
<p>Policy, planning, and decision making related to climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ Greater awareness of gender dimensions of climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction at national and local levels ➔ Greater involvement of women at professional and community levels in planning and decision making related to climate change and disaster risk reduction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have there been specific discussions about how gender mediates the effect of climate change and the risks related to environmental disasters (because of differences between women and men in activities, resources, access to information, etc.), or of the value of taking account of these factors in strategy formulation? • Do consultation processes deliberately seek to reach women to ensure their views and priorities influence decision making? • Do male officials and community leaders encourage women to participate in consultations and show respect for their views and priorities? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allocate resources and expertise to filling gaps in Bhutanese information sources on the interaction between gender and climate change, and gender and disaster risk. • Provide guidance to local governments about issues to address in local planning and inclusive strategies for outreach and consultations with local communities. • Develop strategies to encourage women to seek jobs in national and local government related to climate change adaptation, disaster risk management, extension service provision, community consultation, etc. • Establish links with researchers and civil society advocates with an interest in gender and climate change adaptation.
<p>Adaption in relation to management of water resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ Recognition of the role and interests of women (as well as men) in water resource management ➔ Adoption of specific measures to ensure women's access to water resources and to decision making about them 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do assessments of climate-related challenges include attention to household water needs (for drinking, cooking, and household hygiene) and to the work burdens related to supplying households (usually the responsibility of women)? • Are women appropriately represented in planning the management of catchment areas, including infrastructure, afforestation, etc.? • Are women represented in decisions about water use or allocation of water (for households, irrigation, etc.)? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that domestic as well as agricultural and industrial water needs and uses are addressed in sector analyses and strategies. • Identify the barriers to women's participation in different water user forums (formal barriers and barriers related to work burdens and time, time and place of meetings, or confidence and experience) and develop a strategy to respond to these.
<p>Adaptive capacity in agriculture:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ Increased access by women to extension services and information about adaptive changes in farming practices and choice of crops ➔ Increased access by women to credit and technologies to implement new approaches ➔ Increased productivity and well-being of women farmers and their families 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do vulnerability and capacity assessments consider resources available to farmers by gender? Do they consider whether women farmers have the same access as men farmers to irrigation, tools, labor, information, and literacy, or the resources to manage risk by, for example, diversifying crops, storing food or seeds, using improved seeds, and improving terracing? • In assessing climate-related changes and implications for agriculture, are both women and men consulted for their perspectives? • What proportion of women farmers in at-risk areas have benefited from training and services related to farm practices and crop choices that respond to climate change? • Are women being targeted for modified farming approaches that aid in conserving and protecting fragile soils and environments? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review vulnerability and capacity assessment frameworks to ensure they capture and document women's experience and are able to compare it to men's and use this information to improve strategies and targeting. • Target women for information on climate change and agricultural adaptation strategies, and support them in increasing access to resources to implement these strategies. • Engage women as partners in conservation by ensuring that they have access to information and tools to modify farming approaches.

APPENDIX A. Tip Sheet on Integrating Gender Perspectives in Analysis and Planning in the Sector							
STEP 1: What are the positive outcomes for women or gender equality that could be achieved through gender mainstreaming?		⇒	STEP 2: What are some of the questions we should ask to better understand gender equality issues and women’s needs in these areas?		⇒	STEP 3: What steps or strategies could be considered or adapted to move forward in these areas?	
Adaptive capacity in livestock management: ➔ Increased access by women to extension services knowledge ➔ Equitable access by women to credit and assistance to invest in livestock appropriate to changed conditions ➔ Strengthened livelihood options for women		⇒	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Do livestock inventories and censuses consider ownership by gender of different types of livestock and more resilient breeds (compared to those at risk due to illnesses, insects, and changed fodder availability linked to climate change)?• In assessment of climate-related changes, are women as well as men consulted for their views on livestock health, vulnerability to insects and illnesses, access to fodder, etc.?		⇒	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review vulnerability and capacity assessment frameworks to ensure they capture and document women’s experience and are able to compare it to men’s, and use this information to improve strategies and targeting.• Target women for extension services on livestock breeds and management for sustainability.	
Management of forests and biodiversity: ➔ Increased support for specific ways in which women use forests for fodder, fuel, and medicines as part of household livelihood strategies		⇒	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Do assessments of livelihood interests in forests include the full range of uses by women as well as men (including fuelwood for cooking, fodder for livestock, and various nonwood forest products)?• To what extent are women involved as members and decision makers in community forest management groups?• Do assessments of biodiversity resources draw on the knowledge of both women and men on species and growth habits?		⇒	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ensure that assessments are disaggregated by sex and that analyses use this disaggregated data.• Ensure that information gathered includes the views of women.• Ensure that information distributed about forest use and conservation reaches women.	
Solid waste management: ➔ Increased recognition of women’s role and interests in solid waste management			<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Do assessments of strategies and programs for solid waste management seek the views of women or assess impacts by gender?• Are there livelihood opportunities associated with waste management? Who participates in and benefits from these?			<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identify strategies to involve women in decision making about household waste management.• Consider the support that would enable women to exploit livelihood opportunities related to, for example, recycling.	
Payment for environmental services (PES) or REDD (reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation): ➔ Increased involvement of women in planning and negotiating PES ➔ An equitable share of PES payments received by women directly		⇒	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Do assessments of environmental services provided by rural households and communities document these by sex?• To what extent have women participated in negotiations at the community level for PES pilot and follow-up projects?• Have there been any investigations of how PES incomes are used by communities and households? To what extent do allocations reflect the contributions to the services being compensated?		⇒	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identify roles and activities by sex as part of the socioeconomic assessment for PES initiatives.• Identify constraints to women’s involvement in decision making related to PES initiatives, and develop strategies to counter these constraints and enable women to be effective participants.• Consider options to achieve a greater correspondence between the household or community member that provides services and the recipient of the related payment.	
Disaster risk reduction: ➔ Greater involvement of women at the community level in identifying risks and responses		⇒	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What are the constraints to women being nominated to or attending <i>Dzongkhag</i> and <i>Gewog</i> disaster management committees?• To what extent are women active participants in discussions of disaster risks and response strategies (i.e., do women speak up and others listen)?• Are disaster warning systems for earthquakes and flash floods likely to reach all, regardless of location or literacy?		⇒	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identify and address constraints to women’s participation in disaster management planning, both as formal committee members and as those consulted.• Ensure that women are encouraged to speak up in public consultations.	

APPENDIX B. Useful Resources for Gender Analysis in the Sector

Bhutan based background information and gender-specific resources

Useful sector overviews and background documents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Royal Government of Bhutan. 2012. <i>Bhutan: In Pursuit of Sustainable Development</i>. National Report for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development 2012. http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/798bhutanreport.pdf Gross National Happiness Commission and United Nations Development Programme. 2011. <i>Bhutan National Human Development Report 2011. Sustaining Progress: Rising to the Climate Challenge</i>. www.bt.undp.org/content/dam/bhutan/docs/Energy_environment/Env-publications/2011-NHDR-pub-env.pdf P. Llendup. 2012. Integration of climate adaptation into development and conservation planning in Bhutan: issue identification and recommendations. <i>Adaptation Knowledge Platform, Partner Report Series</i>. No. 1, Stockholm Environment Institute, Bangkok. www.climateadapt.asia/resources/publication/view/97 S. Phuntsho et al. 2011. <i>Community Forestry in Bhutan: Putting People at the Heart of Poverty Reduction</i>. Thimphu: Ugyen Wangchuk Institute for Conservation and Environment and Social Forestry Division of Ministry of Agriculture and Forests. https://assets.helvetas.ch/downloads/2011_phuntsho_et_al_editions_bhutan_cf_poverty_reduction.pdf B. Neves and D. Vallee. 2009. <i>Payments for Environmental Services (PES): Opportunities in Bhutan. Feasibility Assessment</i>. Prepared in cooperation with the Watershed Management Division, Department of Forests. Funded by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization Multi-Donor Partnership Programme. www.dofps.gov.bt/wmd/attachments/PES_FeasibilityAssessment_2009.pdf D. Penjore. 2008. Is National Environment Conservation Success a Rural Failure? The Other Side of Bhutan's Conservation Story. <i>Towards global transformation: proceedings of the Third International Conference on Gross National Happiness</i>. Centre for Bhutan Studies. http://archiv.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/savifadok/volltexte/2010/1386/pdf/National_Conservation.pdf
Relevant legislation, policy statements, and strategy papers (other than five-year plans)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gross National Happiness Commission. 2013. <i>Framework to Mainstream Gender, Environment, Climate Change, Disaster Risk Reduction and Poverty (GECDP) in the 11 FYP of the Local Governments</i>. www.gnhc.gov.bt/wp-content/uploads/2011/05/ECPM-Framework-LG.pdf. For earlier version for the national level, see www.undp.org/content/bhutan/en/home/library/environment_energy/publication_2/ <i>Bhutan National Adaptation Plan of Action</i>. 2006. www.nec.gov.bt/nec1/wp-content/uploads/2012/11/NAPA.pdf; update of 2012: www.nec.gov.bt/nec1/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/NAPA.pdf <i>National Action Plan: Biodiversity Persistence and Climate Change</i>. Bhutan national paper on biodiversity and climate change. Climate Summit for a Living Himalayas, Bhutan 2011. www.moaf.gov.bt/moaf/?wpfb_dl=362 <i>Water Act, 2011</i>. www.nec.gov.bt/nec1/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/Water-Act-FINAL-printed.pdf <i>Waste Prevention and Management Regulation, 2012</i>. www.nec.gov.bt/nec1/?page_id=697
Research and analysis on gender equality and environment in Bhutan or the Himalayas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> M. Khadka and R. Verma, eds. 2012. <i>Gender and Biodiversity Management in the Greater Himalayas: Towards Equitable Mountain Development</i>. Kathmandu: International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development. http://lib.icimod.org/record/20377; or see PowerPoint summary of presentation by same authors to Bhutan+10 Conference at www.icimod.org/?q=9780 International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development. 2010. Gender Perspective in Mountain Development. <i>Sustainable Mountain Development</i>. 57 (Summer 2010). http://lib.icimod.org/record/26861 A. Anand and P. Tshering. 2004. Advancing the Mountain Women's Agenda: From Research to Action. <i>Mountain Research and Development</i>. 24(1). pp. 86–87. www.bioone.org (search by title or author)
Other resources	
Research and articles on gender and environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. 2010. <i>Farmers in a Changing Climate: Does Gender Matter? Food Security in Andhra Pradesh, India</i>. www.fao.org/docrep/013/i1721e/i1721e00.htm A. Otzelburger. 2011. <i>Gender Responsive Strategies on Climate Change: Recent Progress and Ways Forward for Donors</i>. BRIDGE. www.eldis.org/go/home&id=58734&type=Document E. Enarson et al. 2003. <i>Working with Women at Risk. Practical Guidelines for Assessing Local Disaster Risk</i>. International Hurricane Centre. http://gdonline.org/resources/WorkingwithWomenEnglish.pdf

Toward Gender-Equitable Opportunities and Outcomes:

Private Sector Development

Summary	
Sector context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expansion of the private sector is seen as critical for employment generation, poverty reduction, and self-reliance. • Most enterprises are in the small-scale or cottage category. • A consolidated approach is set out in Cottage, Small and Medium Industry Policy, 2012. • The Eleventh Five-Year Plan proposes concentrated support for four or five priority nonhydro sectors and highlights the need for attention to medium as well as cottage and small industries.
Gender equality issues relevant to sector activities and outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women are active as entrepreneurs in various enterprise size and activity categories. • Existing data provide limited insights into the characteristics of women entrepreneurs and their enterprises. • Constraints for women entrepreneurs include access to finance. • Women entrepreneurs also grapple with sociocultural factors. • Stereotypes persist about women's abilities to lead and manage. • Working conditions and pay for private sector employees remain an issue. • Women are an important component of the private sector labor force.
Government commitments to support women or gender equality in the sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Cottage, Small and Medium Industry Policy also makes a commitment to supporting women's entrepreneurship. Measures are specified in the related strategy. • Also relevant to development of an equitable private sector is the regulatory framework for employment conditions.
Looking forward: issues and opportunities to consider	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender mainstreaming in support of women's entrepreneurship • Access to finance by women entrepreneurs in cottage, small, and medium industries • Regulatory environment and equality objectives • Role of business associations
Appendixes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tip Sheet on Integrating Gender Perspectives in the Sector • Useful Resources for Gender Analysis in the Sector

Sector Context

“Vitalizing” industry and the private sector was one of the core strategies of the Tenth Five-Year Plan for equitable socioeconomic development and poverty reduction.¹ The Eleventh Five-Year Plan also emphasizes the importance of attention to developing a more diversified and dynamic private sector.²

Bhutan’s manufacturing and industrial base remains relatively small, but it has been growing, as has the rest of the private service sector. Data on the gross domestic product (GDP) show that overall GDP growth averaged 7.9% per year for the first 4 years of the 10th plan. By sector, the average annual growth in the plan period was 2.3% in the primary sector, 6.4% in the secondary sector, and 12.0% in the tertiary sector.³ Box 1 shows the share of GDP of the major sectors and subsectors of the economy, and their shares of employment.

Within the secondary sector, the main drivers of growth have been hydropower and construction, with manufacturing playing a smaller role. Manufacturing activities in Bhutan include cement, food, iron and steel, and wood-based industries. The manufacturing sector also includes small and cottage industries in such areas as agroprocessing, weaving, and crafts. Within the tertiary sector, the major sources of growth were hotels and restaurants, financial services, and transport and communication services. Wholesale and retail trade is another important element of the sector.⁴

While there are a few large firms—three of which accounted for almost 70% of total manufacturing turnover in 2011⁵—data from various sources confirm that most private sector enterprises in both the secondary and tertiary sectors are small in scale. This includes the enterprise survey done in 2011 that used the size criteria set out in Box 2.

¹ Gross National Happiness Commission. 2009. *Tenth Five-Year Plan, 2008–2013*. Vol. 1. pp. 27–34, 103–110.

² Gross National Happiness Commission. 2012. *Eleventh Five-Year Plan, 2013–2018*. Vol 1. p. 125.

³ Royal Monetary Authority. 2013. *Annual Report 2011–2012*. Calculated from Table 1.1 in section 1.

⁴ Royal Monetary Authority (footnote 3), sections 1.2 for secondary, 1.3 for tertiary.

⁵ Royal Monetary Authority (footnote 3), section 1.2.1.

Box 1. Hydropower and construction now rival agriculture in contribution to gross domestic product, although agriculture still accounts for the largest share of employment, particularly of women

Economic activity (and contribution by sector to average GDP growth 2008–2011)	% of GDP, 2011	Distribution of labor force, 2012	
		Women	Men
Primary (2.3%)	18.0	75.2	48.9
Agriculture, hunting, forestry, fishing	15.7	75.1	48.7
Mining and quarrying	2.3	0.1	0.2
Secondary (6.4%)	38.4	7.1	9.9
Manufacturing	8.2	5.9	4.1
Electricity, gas, water supply	13.9	0.8	3.1
Construction	16.3	0.4	2.7
Tertiary (12.0%)	43.6	17.7	41.1
Wholesale and retail trade	5.4	4.0	3.6
Hotels and restaurants	1.1	2.1	1.5
Transport, storage, and communications	11.1	0.6	4.6
Financial intermediation	6.0	0.5	1.0
Real estate, renting, and business activities	2.2	0.4	0.8
Public admin., education, health, services	12.8	8.8	27.1
Private households with employees	0.4	1.2	2.3
Extraterritorial organizations and bodies		0.1	0.2
(% GDP of indirect taxes less subsidies)	4.6		
	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total numbers employed		168,129	161,363

GDP = gross domestic product (current prices).

Note: Percentages may not total 100% because of rounding.

Sources: Employment data: *Labour Force Survey Report, 2012*. Table 6.1-6.2; GDP data: Royal Monetary Authority. 2013. *Annual Report 2011–2012*. Section III, Table 1.

By size of investment, it found that 51% of firms were cottage (micro) in scale, 38% were small, 9.4% were medium, and 1.4% were large. By number of employees, 22% were single operators without employees, 27% had 1–4 employees, 32% had 5–19 employees, 16% had 20–99 employees, and only 3% had more than 100 employees.⁶ About one-third of enterprises considered cottage industries by asset value had five or more employees. Most cottage and small industries were sole proprietorships (96% of cottage and 89% of small industries).⁷ Box 3 provides some further detail from administrative data on cottage and small industries.

⁶ Ministry of Economic Affairs. *Report on the Enterprise Survey 2011*. pp. 10–11.

⁷ Enterprise Survey (footnote 6), pp. 32–34, 45.

Box 2. The Cottage, Small and Medium Industry Policy, 2012 aims to standardize industry size categories

Scale of industry	Number employed	Investment	
		Million Nu	\$ equivalent
Cottage	1–4	< 1	<18,500
Small	5–19	1–10	18,500–185,000
Medium	20–99	10–100	185,000–1,850,000
Large	100+	>	>1,850,000

< = less than, > = more than.

Note: Both number of employees and investment apply, but where there is a conflict, investment is used.

Source: Royal Government of Bhutan. *Cottage, Small and Medium Industry Policy of the Kingdom of Bhutan*, 2012, p.3.

Box 3. There are more cottage and small industries in the service sector than in production and manufacturing

Number and distribution of cottage and small industries by subsector, together with selected characteristics of each subsector, 2012 (excludes wholesale and retail trade)

Subsector	Number by sector	Distribution by sector	Size category	Main components
Service	8,079	61.8%	78% cottage, 22% small 41.9% female ownership	41% hotels and restaurants; also transport and travel; baking; real estate; repair services; tailoring
Production and manufacturing	1,329	10.2%	81% cottage, 19% small 28.1% female ownership	27% furniture; also forestry, wood products and related; food products, mining and fabricated metal
Contract	3,660	28.0%	100% small 20.9% female ownership	Construction
Total	13,068	100.0%		

Source: Royal Government of Bhutan. *Cottage, Small and Medium Industry Policy of the Kingdom of Bhutan*, 2012, pp. 1–3. Data source is Regional Trade and Industry Offices.

The 2011 enterprise survey was one of several investigations undertaken to inform policy development. The Cottage, Small and Medium Industry (CSMI) Policy was adopted in September 2012. It was soon followed up with a more detailed strategy for 2012–2020. The CSMI policy set out definitions for industry size categories to promote more consistent approaches to data collection

across government (Box 2). It outlines strategic objectives related to the policy and institutional environment, the legislative framework, competitiveness, market access, access to finance, employment, and the culture of entrepreneurship.

The last objective reflects concern about the low appreciation of entrepreneurship in Bhutan, and “a strong cultural preference for employment rather than self-employment, and for public administration rather than business.”⁸ Such preferences contribute to the paradox that labor shortages are reported by many enterprises at the same time that youth unemployment remains high.

The 11th plan strategies include promotion of cottage and small industries in line with the CSMI policy. The plan also introduces a new flagship program, Rapid Investments in Selected Enterprises (RISE), which will give extensive support to four or five nonhydro priority sectors—tentatively tourism, agroprocessing, construction, and small and cottage industries—and a few larger hydro-intensive manufacturing enterprises.⁹

Responsibilities for this sector are shared among several agencies.¹⁰ The Ministry of Economic Affairs has a lead role; key actors include the Department of Cottage and Small Industry, the Department of Trade, and the Department of Industry. Six regional trade and industry offices undertake field activities. Other important actors include the Bhutan Development Bank, which is mandated to provide CSMI financial services, and the Royal Monetary Authority, which regulates the financial services industry.

In addition, the Ministry of Agriculture and Forests supports the formation and functioning of cooperatives and farmers’ groups. The Ministry of Labour and Human Resources provides several entrepreneurship training programs and, more broadly, human resource development strategies to meet the needs of the private sector.

⁸ Royal Government of Bhutan. *CSMI Development Strategy (2012–2014)*, section 4.11.1.

⁹ 11th plan (footnote 2), pp. 127–128.

¹⁰ See outline of responsibilities of various agencies in CSMI Strategy (footnote 8), pp. 28–36.

Gender Equality Issues Relevant to Sector Activities and Outcomes

► *Women are active as entrepreneurs in various size and activity categories*

Women account for a substantial proportion of licenses for activities in trade, particularly at the microenterprise level where they have more than half the licenses, but they also hold 40% of the licenses for retail enterprises (Box 4). With respect to industry, women hold almost half the licenses for service enterprises, which are by far the largest industry subcategory.

The data on license holders suggests that women are active entrepreneurs, and this is confirmed by data collected by different methods.¹¹ Data from the 2011 enterprise survey show that women have a larger share in ownership of cottage enterprises than larger firms, but that they also owned small and medium enterprises. Women were found to be owners or majority shareholders of 29% of all the enterprises surveyed, including 32% of cottage enterprises, 24% of small enterprises, and 17% of medium ones. By sector, the proportion was higher in services (39%), indigenous crafts (36%), and agroprocessing (30%); lower in manufacturing activities such as chemicals, and electronics and metals fabrication (23%); and lowest in construction (18%).¹²

Another survey was done by the World Bank for its 2010 assessment of the investment climate. It focused on firms with five or more employees, and found that one-third of firms in this category had female participation in ownership. This was a higher proportion than found in similar surveys in neighboring countries (27% in Nepal, 16% in Bangladesh, 9% in India).¹³

The World Bank survey found that participation in ownership by women was

Box 4. Women hold a substantial proportion of licenses in both the trade and industry sectors

Number of holders of licenses, by subcategories of license holders in the trade and industry sectors and by sex, December 2012 (operational licenses only)

	Number of women	Number of men	Total	Percentage of women
Licenses for trade				
Microenterprise ^a	8,004	6,377	14,381	55.7%
Retail	1,678	2,512	4,190	40.1%
Wholesale	138	247	385	35.8%
Total	9,820	9,136	18,956	51.8%
Licenses for industry^b				
Production and manufacturing	269	754	1,023	26.3%
Services	5,261	5,708	10,969	48.0%
Contract	703	2,240	2,943	23.9%
Total	6,233	8,702	14,935	41.7%

^a Enterprises with turnover of less than Nu1 million (about \$18,500).

^b Where turnover is less than Nu100,000 (about \$1,850), no license is required.

Source: Information provided by Bhutan Ministry of Economic Affairs, January 2013.

more likely in manufacturing (including food processing and crafts) and services (including trade, and hotel and restaurants), and less likely in construction. The survey also found that a larger proportion of firms owned by women than firms owned by men were in the “large firm” category—22% of firms owned by women were large firms, compared with 5% of firms owned by men. That is, women entrepreneurs in Bhutan are not limited to smaller firms.¹⁴

Another perspective is provided by the 2012 Labour Force Survey, which reports that 18% of all economically active women are employers (compared with 21% of men) and another 54% of women are own-account workers (compared to 24% of men).¹⁵

► *Existing data provide limited insights into the characteristics of women entrepreneurs and their enterprises*

While data on entrepreneurs and enterprises can be found in several different sources, it is difficult to gain a clear view of the situation of women and how it compares with that of men. As noted in Box 5, the different sources cover different components of the

¹¹ It is possible that not all women holding a license were effectively in charge of the enterprise, as some may hold on behalf of family members.

¹² Enterprise Survey (footnote 6), pp. 43–45. (The size category was based on assets rather than employee numbers, and did not include firms above the medium category.)

¹³ World Bank. 2010. *Bhutan Investment Climate Assessment Report: Vitalizing the Private Sector, Creating Jobs*. Washington. Vol. II. pp. 60–61.

¹⁴ World Bank. 2010. *Bhutan Investment Climate Assessment Report*. Washington. Vol. I. pp. 17–18.

¹⁵ Ministry of Labour and Human Resources. 2012. *Labour Force Survey Report 2012*. Table 7.6.

Box 5. Various data sources present different bits of different puzzles, making it difficult to get an overall picture

The main sources cover different components of the private sector from different points of view and using different categories or definitions for data collection. Most provide only limited breakdowns by sex.^a

- Data on license holders from the Department of Industry is presented annually in the *Statistical Yearbook of Bhutan*; it includes breakdowns by size of enterprise, sector, and *Dzongkhag* (district), but category definitions are not provided and the totals include inactive license-holders. None of the data is disaggregated by sex of owner.^a
- The *Cottage and Small Industry Report, 2012* is perhaps the first of an annual series and provides summary data drawn from business registration records of regional trade and industry offices. It reports on active industries (less than half the number of those registered), but does not provide definitions and seems to exclude the trade sector. It provides a sectoral breakdown of ownership by sex; however, this is at a rather broad level (production and manufacturing, service, and contract).
- A periodic establishment census done by the Ministry of Labour and Human Resources covers all sectors including trade (which was the predominant sector in 2008 and 2010); it provides more data on types of activities by establishment and on aspects of ownership, but nothing on ownership by sex; it also provides more data than the other sources above on employment, some with breakdowns by sex.^a
- The 2011 Enterprise Survey done by the Ministry of Economic Affairs to support policy development includes enterprises that were independently owned and owner-managed (with a focus on the micro, small, and medium scale, defined by assets); it uses an industry classification used by the Ministry of Economic Affairs rather than the International Standard Industrial Classification (ISIC). It generated a table on the gender of the owner or majority shareholder by size of enterprise and another on gender of owner by size of industry, but did not follow through with breakdowns by gender on owner's education, years of experience, markets supplied, revenues, constraints, etc. Some limited information about employees is provided with sex breakdowns.
- The enterprise survey for the 2010 investment climate assessment by the World Bank sampled enterprises with five or more employees (thus omitting at least part of the cottage scale). It included manufacturing, construction, and services (including trade), but not financial services, real estate, and utilities sectors (using ISIC classifications). The report provides information on women's participation in ownership and compares the views of male and female entrepreneurs on constraints; it also provides some information on women's employment in the private sector.
- The annual Labour Force Survey covers all sectors. Categories of employment include employees and own-account workers; categories of enterprises include private businesses, private corporations, and agriculture. Most data is sex-disaggregated, but it is difficult to align with the information from the other sources mentioned above.

^a Another complicating issue with the 2011 data on license holders reported in the 2012 *Statistical Yearbook* is that it seems to omit production and manufacturing activities from most of the tables and totals. The same chapter of the yearbook provides otherwise unpublished data from the 2010 Establishment Census, which has very different numbers without any explanation (e.g., different coverage).

Source: Compiled for this report. See data sources section in Appendix B to this chapter for detailed citations of documents noted.

private sector and/or use different ways of categorizing enterprises by size or activity, so it is difficult to reconcile the sources of information. And few except the labor force survey provide much data by sex.

Another complicating factor is the limited detail provided in the sources about the sectors or enterprises covered or about category definitions. It seems that in some sources, such as the 2011 Enterprise Survey, cooperatives and possibly registered farmers' groups are included in data on enterprises, but other sources do not mention whether these would qualify. Enterprises with trading activities seem to be covered by the 2011 Enterprise Survey (as part of the service sector) but are not included in other data provided on cottage and small industries. Most cottage and small industries were found to be sole proprietorships and a substantial proportion had no employees aside from (presumably) the proprietor, but whether or how they differ from own-account or self-employed workers is not clarified.

From a gender perspective, particular gaps include the following:

- *Characteristics of enterprises by sex of owner.* It would be useful to know how enterprises owned by women and men compare on factors such as level of investment, turnover, profitability, access to finance, and number of employees.
- *Characteristics of enterprise owners by sex.* It would also be useful to see how male and female entrepreneurs compare with regard to levels of education, specialized training, etc.
- *The trade sector.* Data on enterprises in the trade sector seem to be omitted from several data sources, even though the micro or cottage component of the trade sector accounts for the largest number of enterprises for both women and men.

Role of the enterprise in a livelihood strategy. Some cottage industries and microtrade enterprises probably generate very low revenues, but could be part-time or seasonal activities, such as handicraft work in the low season for agriculture.¹⁶ The attributes of

¹⁶ Ministry of Economic Affairs. 2012. *Diagnostic Trade Integration Study*. pp. 6–7.

such enterprises appear to be sufficiently different from larger ones to merit separate identification in the data.

► ***Constraints for women entrepreneurs include access to finance***

In Bhutan, the limited reach of financial service providers means that lending outside larger urban areas tends to be informal. A recent assessment of household financial practices found that only 53% of rural respondents had a bank savings account, compared with 80% in urban areas. There was a similar rural–urban discrepancy in those using formal loan products. The study noted that women appeared well informed about financial products, particularly in rural areas, and were more comfortable than men with automatic tellers and mobile phone banking. However, the study also found that the proportion of rural women who reported using financial services was lower than the proportion of rural entrepreneurs or farmers who reported doing so.¹⁷

The World Bank study of businesses with five or more employees found that women entrepreneurs were more likely than men to cite access to finance as a problem (37% of women compared with 26% of men), and that women were less likely to have a loan or line of credit from a financial institution (47% of businesses owned by women, compared with 63% of businesses owned by men).¹⁸

Studies in many countries note that women entrepreneurs face more constraints to success than men, with access to finance generally topping the list of constraints. Women-owned enterprises have been found to be underserved—less likely to obtain formal financing, paying higher interest rates, getting smaller loans, and more reliant than men on family sources for start-up funds.¹⁹

► ***Women entrepreneurs also grapple with sociocultural factors***

Local government officials consulted in relation to this report highlighted several

ways in which women were more constrained than men in time and support to start up and maintain enterprises. This included expectations related to the management of households and children. Also important were entrenched views about appropriate roles for women and their capacities, which limited the support families and others provided and the confidence that women themselves had in their ideas and abilities.²⁰

► ***Stereotypes persist about women's abilities to lead and manage***

While it is frequently claimed that women in Bhutan enjoy equal rights and opportunities, an interesting small study suggests that young men and women studying at Sherubtse College, Bhutan's leading educational institute, are sharply divided by sex on this claim and on women's capacities. Questioned on discrimination against women in Bhutan, 48% of female respondents thought this was a very serious or somewhat serious issue, but only 29% of men held the same view. On the question of why so few women occupy top business and administrative positions, men were much more likely to attribute this to lesser capacities of women—they were not tough enough, were not as good bosses, were not sufficiently interested—while women were more likely to refer to societal factors and discriminatory practices (Box 6).

While these findings are based on a small survey, they are suggestive of more broadly held views and of barriers women may face as employees seeking higher management positions and as entrepreneurs seeking financing or other support.

► ***Working conditions and pay in the private sector remain an issue***

While private sector growth is seen as the means to absorb the growing labor force, employers and employees have different views on private sector work and workers.

From the employer perspective, the low level of workforce skills has been cited as a issue, with medium and larger firms and those that export being more likely to report this as their biggest problem. The lack of workforce skills was also an important concern in

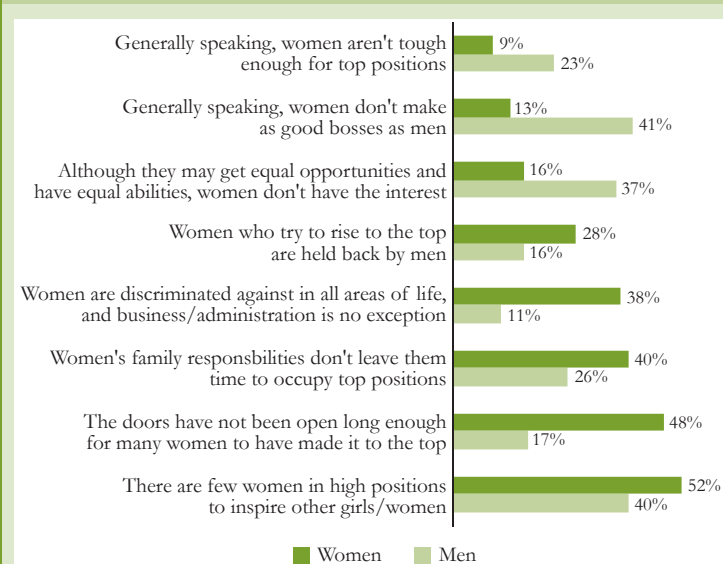
¹⁷ C. Niang et al. 2013. *Connecting the Disconnected: Coping Strategies of the Financially Excluded in Bhutan*. Washington, DC: World Bank. p. 20.

¹⁸ World Bank 2010 (footnote 13), Vol. II. pp. 64–65.

¹⁹ International Finance Corporation. 2011. *Strengthening Access to Finance for Women-Owned SMEs in Developing Countries*. Prepared for the Global Partnership for Financial Inclusion. Washington, DC. pp. 34–38.

²⁰ Consultation workshops in two *Dzongkhags*, Sarpang and Samdrup Jongkhar, October 2013.

Box 6. Young women and men have sharply different views on why so few women occupy top business and administrative positions



Percentage of female respondents vs. percentage of male respondents who believe each statement is a major reason why few women are in top business and administrative positions.

Source: T. Tshomo, T. Angmo, and S. Patel. 2010. *The Gender Divide in Bhutan: Opinions on the status of women split along gender lines among college students*. Research paper by members of Sherubtse College, Royal University of Bhutan.

Box 7. The private sector is an important source of employment for women



Number employed in nonagriculture activities, by sex, 2012

Source: Ministry of Labour and Human Resources. *Labour Force Survey Report, 2012*. Table 3.3.

manufacturing and construction. However, high attrition (particularly in tourism and information technology) reduced incentives to invest in worker training.²¹

From the employee perspective, the private sector is seen by many as offering low-quality jobs, few career prospects, and poor remuneration. A survey of employees of enterprises with five or more employees—the

more established firms—found that more than one-third of employees were dissatisfied with their salary, and another one-fifth were unhappy with their benefits and working conditions. More than one-quarter had no paid leave, and half worked more than 48 hours per week.²²

Women and men surveyed had similar job satisfaction levels and identified the same problems. However, the data on earnings suggests that there are major wage disparities between women and men with management and professional jobs and among unskilled production workers (although not among skilled production workers or nonproduction workers). Controlling for factors such as education, age, job category, and firm size, women earned about 10% less than men.²³

► Women are an important component of the private sector labor force

The chart in Box 7 shows the participation of women compared with men in economic activities outside agriculture in the private and public sectors. The numbers include persons involved in various categories of economic activity (including entrepreneurs and employees, but also own-account workers and unpaid workers in family enterprises), and illustrate the extent to which women rely on the private sector for their livelihood.

Government Commitments to Support Women or Gender Equality in the Sector

Following up on the 10th plan objectives for private sector development, the 2010 Economic Development Policy included a commitment to promote cottage and small industries to “generate employment, support equitable distribution of income and bring about balanced regional development.” It proposed the development of a cottage and small industries policy, which would include a “special focus on women’s enterprises.”²⁴

The Cottage, Small and Medium Industry (CSMI) policy that followed (with medium

²¹ World Bank 2010 (footnote 13), Vol. II. p. 25.

²² World Bank 2010 (footnote 13), Vol. II. p. 27.

²³ World Bank 2010 (footnote 13), Vol. II. pp. 68–71.

²⁴ Royal Government of Bhutan. *Economic Development Policy of the Kingdom of Bhutan, 2010*. para. 7.3.2.

industries added to cottage and small) was adopted in 2012. It included a commitment to “promote women entrepreneurship in CSMI to maximize the economic contribution of both genders.”²⁵ The measures proposed to implement this commitment were set out in the CSMI strategy (quoted in Box 8).

Also included in the CSMI strategy are a set of measures to enhance competitiveness, including the development of clusters or value chains. Business clusters were defined as geographic or sector concentrations of industries, suppliers, and institutions in a particular field; and a value chain was defined as a sequence of activities through which products must pass, gaining value at each step. Areas of focus envisaged for cluster development include apple processing, textiles, and wood-based industries; for value chain development they include dairy and organic foods, and wellness products based on traditional medicine. These areas of focus include several that have been particularly important for women’s enterprises, such as textiles. Cooperation with the Agency for Promotion of Indigenous Crafts is also envisaged in four crafts, including weaving, which is traditionally a women’s craft.²⁶

The CSMI policy also aims to increase access by enterprises to commercial bank finance through measures such as capacity building on alternative credit appraisal methods and innovative financial products, and expansion of credit guarantees. This could help address some of the credit needs of women’s as well as men’s enterprises, as could the proposed measures for effective microfinance institutions (CSMI Policy, para. 6.3).

Also important in this sector is the Cooperatives Act 2001 (as amended 2009), under which farmers’ groups and other self-help groups providing products or services can be registered and thus have the juridical personality necessary to access finance.²⁷

Finally, the regulatory framework for employment is also relevant to development of an equitable private sector. The Labour

Box 8. The Cottage, Small and Medium Industry Development Strategy outlines measures to support women’s entrepreneurship

The following measures were outlined in the Cottage, Small and Medium Industry Development (CSMI) Strategy, 2012–2020:

- Prepare a regular report on female entrepreneurship: characteristics, barriers (economic, social and cultural), attitudes, needs, etc. and recommendations for policy development.
- Establish a female entrepreneur of the year award.
- Stimulate participation by CSMI female entrepreneurs on boards of state-owned companies.
- Seek to stimulate female participation in all Boards of companies (to be pursued in future action plans).
- Establish a sustainable Women’s Business Association to promote female entrepreneurship.
- Give preference to women in entrepreneurial training and education programmes.
- Prepare a feasibility study for establishment of a women-oriented business incubator.

Source: Royal Government of Bhutan. *Cottage, Small and Medium Industry Development Strategy (2012–2020)*. Section 4.11.5.

and Employment Act of Bhutan, 2007 prohibits discrimination in recruitment, dismissal, promotion, and pay; prohibits sexual harassment; and provides for maternity leave.

Looking Forward: Issues and Opportunities to Consider

This section highlights a number of issues and opportunities that merit consideration as part of the formulation of strategies for private sector development.

► Gender mainstreaming in support of women’s entrepreneurship

The 2012 CSMI policy and strategy made important commitments to support women’s entrepreneurship (Box 8).

To ensure that these women-focused measures have a broader and long-term impact, it will be important to reflect similar concerns in mainstream programs. For example, in addition to considering the feasibility of a women-focused business incubator, ensuring women’s participation in other incubators is also part of creating equitable opportunities. Similarly, women’s participation would also need to be encouraged and monitored in mainstream initiatives related to business development services, fiscal and nonfiscal

²⁵ Royal Government of Bhutan. *Cottage, Small and Medium Industry Policy*, 2012. para. 6.6.4.

²⁶ CSMI Strategy (footnote 8), section 4.9.3.

²⁷ *Cooperatives Act of Bhutan, 2001 and Cooperatives (Amendment) Act of Bhutan, 2009*.

incentives for start-ups, trade fairs, and vocational education and training in order to achieve an approach that provides equitable opportunities for women.

► ***Access to finance by women entrepreneurs***

Related to the previous point, the CSMI strategy aims to increase access by enterprises to commercial bank finance through measures to build the capacity of banks, expand credit guarantees, etc. Gender equality considerations are only noted in relation to microfinance but are equally important to larger financial needs and other strategies to increase access to finance.

The need for attention to gender equity considerations at levels above microcredit was highlighted by the World Bank's *Investment Climate Assessment Report*, which found that women entrepreneurs had less access to finance than men, and were more acutely conscious of finance as a constraint. The assessment recommended further research to better understand this gap: "Both qualitative (focus groups) and quantitative (more in-depth firm-level surveys) research should be conducted to tease out the factors that could contribute to decreased access to finance: awareness of financing options, ability to navigate application processes, credit-worthiness of the individual/company, cost of financing, and collateral requirements are all possible factors."²⁸

► ***Regulatory environment and equality objectives***

The Labour and Employment Act of Bhutan, 2007 is an important statement of principle about equity in employment and minimum conditions of work. Some concerns have been expressed about the applicability of this framework to cottage and small industries.²⁹ However, given that the CSMI policy links itself to poverty reduction and the gross national happiness framework, it seems important to ensure that efforts to develop the private sector aim to strengthen working conditions and equity in employment.

► ***Role of business associations***

Women entrepreneurs remain a minority and this is also reflected in their representation in business associations.³⁰ However, the recent election of a woman to head the Construction Association of Bhutan, one of the larger business associations, will provide greater visibility for women entrepreneurs and the range of their activities.

Business associations, and particularly the largest, the Bhutan Chamber of Commerce and Industry, could be encouraged to play a greater role both in encouraging women's enterprises and in ensuring better awareness among employers of legislative standards on equity in employment.

Women-focused organizations, such as the Bhutan Association of Women Entrepreneurs, can also play an important role in drawing attention to the needs of their members.

²⁸ World Bank 2010 (footnote 13), Vol. II. p. 65.

²⁹ CSMI Strategy (footnote 8), section 4.7.9.

³⁰ Gross National Happiness Commission and National Commission for Women and Children. 2008. *National Plan of Action for Gender, 2008–2013*. p.39.

APPENDIX A. Tip Sheet on Integrating Gender Perspectives in Analysis and Planning in the Sector		
STEP 1: What are the positive outcomes for women or gender equality that could be achieved through gender mainstreaming?	STEP 2: What are some of the questions we should ask to better understand gender equality issues and women's needs in these areas?	STEP 3: What steps or strategies could be considered or adapted to move forward in these areas?
<p>Data and analysis on cottage, small, and medium industries (CSMIs):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Policy makers more informed about the needs and circumstances of women (and men) entrepreneurs → More effective and supportive policies and programs addressing the needs of women (and men) entrepreneurs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are data on entrepreneurship and industries routinely disaggregated by sex (of owner or principal owner)? Do available data allow comparisons of the profiles of female- and male-owned enterprises? • Do the data allow assessment of whether women and men entrepreneurs face the same opportunities and constraints with respect to finance, labor, regulatory matters, etc.? • Do the data allow assessment of the gender dimensions of family-owned businesses and subsistence and or livelihood activities? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that consultations in developing survey questions include both women and men and consider potential gender-specific issues that should be covered. • Aim to include an appropriate and representative proportion of women entrepreneurs in the survey sample and present data in a sex-disaggregated form. • In data analysis, consider how women and men compare regarding entrepreneurship profile (sector, size, number of employees, exports, etc.), constraints to productivity and expansion, etc. • Supplement surveys with focus groups to assist with interpretation of findings.
<p>Regulatory reforms:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → More user-friendly and accessible registration, licensing, and permit procedure → All reforms remain consistent with equity commitments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do location or service hours for licensing and registration result in barriers to access by women (e.g., due to time pressures on rural women given family responsibilities, constraints on transport)? • If the internet or information technologies are used for registration and licensing processes, are there alternatives for women and others less likely to benefit because they are not literate, or lack access to the technology? • How do employment conditions (pay, leave, and hours) compare between women and men in the various CSMI categories? How do they compare with minimum standards legislation? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involve women in the private sector (employers and employees, and women in business associations) and gender equality advocates (in government and civil society) in discussions of reform options. • Ensure that regulatory reforms are consistent with commitments to equality between women and men (in the constitution, labor legislation, the National Gender Platform of Action, and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women).
<p>Access to finance by CSMIs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Equitable access to credit by women-owned and women-managed CSMIs (not only to livelihood and very micro level) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What proportion of CSMI credit goes to enterprises owned by women? How does their average loan size compare with their male counterparts? Are there differences in interest rates or collateral requirements? • Do female and male entrepreneurs differ in their perceptions of how they are treated by personnel of banks and other financial service providers? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage lenders to modify data systems so that they generate sex-disaggregated information about borrowers and loans. • Consult women entrepreneurs about issues in access to credit (including issues related to their enterprise or assets, or to the terms of offer of financial products). • Require that financial institutions provide equitable services and treatment of women-owned and/or managed CSMIs and advise and guide them on approaches.
<p>Access to financial services by individuals and households (including for own-account work):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Increased access by women to appropriate financial services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are low literacy rates in rural areas, particularly among women, a barrier to use of services based on information and communication technology (mobile phone, internet)? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage financial service providers to strengthen data systems to generate sex-disaggregated data on clients (depositors, borrowers, and service users) and to monitor for equitable access and use of services.

APPENDIX A. Tip Sheet on Integrating Gender Perspectives in Analysis and Planning in the Sector							
STEP 1: What are the positive outcomes for women or gender equality that could be achieved through gender mainstreaming?		⇒	STEP 2: What are some of the questions we should ask to better understand gender equality issues and women's needs in these areas?		⇒	STEP 3: What steps or strategies could be considered or adapted to move forward in these areas?	
➔ Innovative lending models that respond to the needs and problems of women entrepreneurs			• Are the financial services offered adapted to meet the needs of individuals who wish to make small, frequent deposits or borrow small amounts? • Do banks and other financial service providers collect data by sex on clients and services used (e.g., do they have data to track the clients for deposit and credit accounts by sex)?			• Encourage banks and other financial service providers to consider whether there are gender-differentiated factors relevant to the design of financial products and services for excluded groups (e.g., specific factors affecting rural women, women farmers, women own-account workers, etc.).	
Information, advisory, and support services for CSMTs: ➔ Reduced gender gaps in access to information, technology, business support services, and infrastructure facilities (industrial estates and export-processing zones) ➔ Better access by women entrepreneurs to entrepreneurship training ➔ Increased productivity and earnings of women-owned enterprises		⇒	• Are women entrepreneurs and managers using existing information services for CSMTs? Are there gender-specific barriers to access that need to be addressed? • Are women participating in training programs to enhance entrepreneurial skills and the performance and competitiveness of CSMTs? That is, do they benefit from an equitable share of mainstream training courses (not only initiatives specifically targeted to women)? • Are services available to home-based enterprises and livelihood activities adequate to enable them to move from a “subsistence” to a “business” basis?		⇒	• Target women for training, information, and advice related to enterprise expansion and profitability (for all sizes of enterprise, not only the micro and livelihoods scales). • Ensure that programs and services do not inadvertently exclude women (by ignoring women-specific barriers related to, e.g., literacy, time pressures limiting travel, and lack of access to technology).	
Private sector practices in human resource management: ➔ Better awareness and compliance with measures to protect women and promote equality between women and men in the workplace		⇒	• Are entrepreneurs and employers aware of the requirements of the labor legislation on nondiscrimination in recruitment and wages, and on protection from sexual harassment? • Do the hiring and pay practices of small, medium, and larger establishments conform to these requirements? • Are women workers aware of these rights and able to act on them?		⇒	• Collaborate with mainstream business associations (e.g., chambers of commerce, sector or regional associations) to increase awareness among enterprise owners of government aims and legislation to promote equality in the workplace. • Collaborate with the business associations to identify strategies to meet the aims of the legislation on workplace equality that are appropriate to the size and nature of the organization.	
Skills and knowledge of employees in the private sector: ➔ Reduction in the skills (and income) gap between women and men		⇒	• What training opportunities are available in sectors in which women predominate? • Do private sector employers (particularly larger enterprises, but also small and medium ones) provide opportunities to employees to upgrade their skills? Do women have equitable access?		⇒	• Encourage employers to maintain data by sex on training opportunities provided to employees, in order to track equitable access by women (as required by the Labour and Employment Act, 2007 but also as a means to maximize use of human resources).	
Capacity of business and entrepreneur groups and associations: ➔ Better representation of the views and interests of women entrepreneurs ➔ Greater awareness and leadership on equal rights and equitable treatment of women in the workplace		⇒	• What steps are taken by such associations to ensure that the views and interests of women entrepreneurs influence the associations’ strategies, outreach programs, and policy recommendations? • What steps are being taken by such organizations to increase awareness and implementation of equal rights and equal treatment of women in the workplace?		⇒	• Encourage such associations to undertake outreach to women entrepreneurs and encourage their participation. • Encourage such associations to take a leadership role in encouraging their members to take a positive role in achieving equal opportunities in the workplace.	

APPENDIX B. Useful Resources for Gender Analysis in the Sector

Bhutan-specific background information and gender-specific research

Useful sector overviews and background documents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • J. Billetoft. 2010. <i>Thematic Paper on Private Sector Potential</i>. Joint Evaluation of Danish-Bhutanese Country Programme 2000–2009. http://um.dk/en/~media/UM/English-site/Documents/Danida/Eval/978-87-7087-426-7/201002ThematicPaper_PrivateSector_Final.jpg • Ministry of Economic Affairs. 2012. <i>Diagnostic Trade Integration Study</i>. www.moea.gov.bt/documents/files/pub5sg7255wr.pdf • World Bank. 2010. <i>Bhutan Investment Climate Investment Report: Vitalizing the Private Sector, Creating Jobs</i>. Vol. I: Executive Summary, Vol. II: Assessment. www.worldbank.org/en/country/bhutan (under resources)
Relevant legislation, policy statements and strategy papers (other than five-year plans)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Cottage, Small and Medium Industry Policy, 2012</i>. www.gnhc.gov.bt/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/CSMI-Policy-2012.pdf • <i>Economic Development Policy, Bhutan, 2010</i>. www.gnhc.gov.bt/wp-content/uploads/2012/04/EDP.pdf • Relevant other policies or legislation: Enterprise Registration Act; Financial Inclusion Policy; Cooperatives Act of Bhutan, 2001; Cooperatives (Amendment) Act of Bhutan, 2009; and Labour and Employment Act of Bhutan 2007. Most of these are available at http://oag.gov.bt/resources/acts
Data sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ministry of Economic Affairs. <i>Cottage and Small Industry Report, 2012</i>. Brief report from the Department of Industry. May be annual in the future. • Ministry of Economic Affairs. <i>Report on the Enterprise Survey 2011</i>. Publication available from the ministry (not posted online). A summary of the survey and related analysis is found in <i>Cottage, Small and Medium Industry Development Strategy (2010–2020)</i>. www.moea.gov.bt/documents/files/pub5km617zd.pdf • Royal Monetary Authority. <i>Annual Report 2012–2013</i>. Report issued annually in January, section with economic review provides useful economic overview by sector. www.rma.org.bt/annualreporttp.jsp • Ministry of Labour and Human Resources. <i>Annual Labour Force Survey</i>. www.molhr.gov.bt/molhrsite/?page_id=577
Research and analyses on gender equality and private sector development in Bhutan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • World Bank. 2010. <i>Bhutan Investment Climate Investment Report: Vitalizing the Private Sector, Creating Jobs</i>. Chapter on Women in Business in Vol. II. www.worldbank.org/en/country/bhutan (under resources) • C. Niang et al. 2013. Connecting the Disconnected: Coping Strategies of the Financially Excluded in Bhutan. <i>Directions in Development</i>. Washington, DC: World Bank. http://go.worldbank.org/WUTHB8RZ50 (Study that includes a discussion on women's knowledge and use of financial services, although information collected about ownership of accounts, loans taken, use of loans, etc. is not disaggregated.) • United Nations Conference on Trade and Development. 2011. <i>Who is Benefiting from Trade Liberalization in Bhutan? A Gender Perspective</i>. http://unctad.org/en/Docs/osg2011d1_en.pdf • T. Tshomo, T. Angmo, and S. Patel. 2010. <i>The Gender Divide in Bhutan: Opinions on the Status of Women Split along Gender Lines among College Students</i>. Research paper by members of Sherubtse College, Royal University of Bhutan. http://jr.sherubtse.edu.bt/index.php/pd1/article/view/46
Other sources	
Research and articles on gender and private sector development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Global Entrepreneurship Monitor. <i>2010 Women's Report</i>. www.gemconsortium.org/news/757/gem-2010-womens-report- • International Finance Corporation (IFC). 2011. <i>Strengthening Access to Finance for Women-Owned SMEs in Developing Countries</i>. Prepared for the Global Partnership for Financial Inclusion. www.ifc.org and search title; on same website, search for “women in business” for other IFC studies and resources. • Equations. 2007. <i>Women in Tourism: Realities, Dilemmas and Opportunities</i>. www.equitabletourism.org/readfull.php?AID=419
Guides and case studies on gender and private sector development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • World Bank. <i>Female Entrepreneurship Resource Point</i>. http://go.worldbank.org/UI27QY1330 • S. Semavi, C. Manuel, and M. Blackden. 2010. <i>Gender Dimensions of Investment Climate Reform. A Guide for Policy Makers and Practitioners</i>. Washington: World Bank. https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/2408 • Asian Development Bank. 2011. <i>Gender Equality Results Case Studies: Bhutan</i>. pp. 1–6. Case study on microenterprise project. www.adb.org/publications/gender-equality-results-case-studies-bhutan

Toward Gender-Equitable Opportunities and Outcomes:

Transport: Roads and Services

Summary	
Sector context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expansion of rural road networks has been pursued for several decades as strategic investments for improved quality of life and economic opportunity. • Road access is consistently a top priority of rural communities. • Transport services are also critical, as are feeder and national roads.
Gender equality issues relevant to sector activities and outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rural road access promises many benefits to rural inhabitants. • More information is needed to assess whether increased road access benefits women and men similarly. • Increased road access entails potential costs and hazards. • Women seem to carry a disproportionate share of unpaid routine maintenance of farm roads. • Few women are involved in local decision making about roads. • Improved transport services and pedestrian facilities are also critical to mobility. • Women's transport safety can be enhanced through infrastructure and transport planning. • Working conditions for manual road workers, particularly women, merit review. • Employment in the transport sector remains largely male.
Government commitments to support women or gender equality in the sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are no sector-specific gender equality commitments. • Emphasis on the role of transport investment in improving mobility of people and goods, and quality of life is conducive to addressing gender-related issues. • The Labour and Employment Act, 2007, which prohibits discrimination in recruitment, pay, conditions, is also relevant.
Looking forward: issues and opportunities to consider	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working and living conditions of the National Work Force • Capacity and management practices in the construction industry • Livelihood and entrepreneurial opportunities related to routine road maintenance • Livelihood and entrepreneurial opportunities in transport services and roadside amenities
Appendixes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tip Sheet on Integrating Gender Perspectives in the Sector • Useful Resources for Gender Analysis in the Sector

Sector Context

The road and transport network has been a major focus of development investments in Bhutan since the first five-year plan in 1961. Under the Tenth Five-Year Plan, 2008–2013, further extension and upgrading of the road network was pursued as one of the major strategic infrastructure investments for promoting growth and reducing poverty.

In particular, further extension of rural roads was described as critical, and the 10th plan's target was to develop the road network, including feeder and district roads, mule tracks, and farm roads, so that 85% of the rural population would be less than half a day's walk from the nearest road. The 10th plan also included a more specific target for its rural access program—to reduce the proportion of the rural population living more than one hour's walk from a motorable road from 40% to 20%. Another aim was to provide road access to every *Gewog* (county) center.¹

Despite considerable investment in roads and bridges under the 10th plan, the targets for rural roads have been recognized as possibly too ambitious to be met, given the challenges of the terrain as well as constraints related to resources and technical capacity.² Another issue is whether the current approach to routine maintenance of farm roads is adequate to ensure sustainability.³

The 10th plan concerns also included transport services, including the accessibility, affordability, and equity of passenger transport services throughout the country; promotion of urban transport services; and expansion of freight transport and related infrastructure (including terminals, waiting

areas, and rest facilities).⁴ Transport services were also addressed in the Economic Development Policy, 2010, which included commitments to deregulate surface transport; promote organized public transport within cities; and promote clean, safe, and reliable public transport in all *Dzongkhags* (districts), beginning with the major cities.⁵

Concerns related to roads highlighted in the Eleventh Five-Year Plan, 2013–2018 reflect increased traffic volume and pressure on the roads; and strategies emphasize completion of the highway grid, upgrading of roads connecting hydropower projects, and paving of *Gewog* connectivity roads.⁶

The 11th plan also aims to strengthen access to public transport, particularly in rural areas, through continued subsidies of transport operators (of which there were 21 in 2013, managing more than 100 buses on 73 routes). In urban transit, the aim is to reduce congestion and emissions through eco-friendly mass public transport. Other strategies identified relate to road safety and to exploring alternate means of transport, including waterways, ropeways, and railway links.⁷

Major actors in the transport sector include several departments of national ministries as well as local governments.⁸ The Department of Roads in the Ministry of Works and Human Settlement is responsible for the construction and maintenance of national and secondary highways and for *Dzongkhag* and feeder roads, although *Dzongkhags* are responsible for prioritization and routine maintenance of feeder roads. For farm roads, identification and prioritization is done by *Gewogs* in accordance with criteria set by the Ministry of Agriculture and Forests; planning is done by *Dzongkhag* engineering staff; and *Gewogs* manage the contracting process. Completed roads are handed over to beneficiary user groups, who are responsible for maintenance. Despite the multiple purposes served by these

¹ Gross National Happiness Commission. 2009. *Tenth Five-Year Plan, 2008–2013*. Target of 85%/half day's walk: Vol. 1, pp. 42–43; 20%/one hour's walk: Vol. 2, pp. 31–32; connecting *Gewogs*: Vol. 1, p. 140.

² Gross National Happiness Commission. 2011. *Eleventh Round Table Meeting, Turning Vision into Reality: the Development Challenges Confronting Bhutan*. p. 42.

³ Nordic Consulting Group A/S. 2012. *Technical Study on Environmental and Social Impacts of Investments Made by Local Governments in Bhutan (with a particular focus on farm road investments)*. Study commissioned by the Sustainable Environment Support Programme, Gross National Happiness Commission, and the Representation Office of Denmark in Bhutan.

⁴ 10th plan (footnote 1), pp. 154–155.

⁵ Royal Government of Bhutan. *Economic Development Policy of the Kingdom of Bhutan, 2010*. Section 7.13.

⁶ Gross National Happiness Commission. 2013. *Eleventh Five-Year Plan, 2013–2018*. pp. 144–146.

⁷ 11th plan (footnote 6), pp. 141–143.

⁸ See Technical Study (footnote 3), pp. 4–15, for a useful detailed discussion of the division of responsibilities and the interactions between levels.

farm roads, the overall supervision is from the Ministry of Agriculture and Forests.

Transport services, licensing, road safety, and related matters are dealt with by the Ministry of Information and Communications. This ministry also developed an overall vision statement for transport titled *Bhutan Transport 2040: an Integrated Strategic Vision*.⁹

Gender Equality Issues Relevant to Sector Activities and Outcomes

► *Rural road access promises many benefits to rural inhabitants*

The major focus on rural road access in the 10th plan reflects the views of local communities, who consistently cite this as their primary development need. The need to improve rural roads and road access also features in local government discussions and representations by rural communities to the national assembly.¹⁰

Various indicators and studies suggest that improved road access has indeed increased the quality of life and opportunities for the rural population in Bhutan. For example, the 2010 poverty-mapping study of rural Bhutan found a strong correlation between connections to road networks, market access, and poverty reduction. Development partners' studies of the results of rural access projects have found increases in local enterprise, agricultural sales, and other economic activities as markets and goods become more accessible. Travel time and costs to reach markets, schools, and health facilities have also been found to decline significantly.¹¹

► *More information is needed to assess whether increased road access benefits women and men similarly*

Inquiries about community views on development priorities or about the impacts of an expanded road network provide very limited insight into whether the benefits of improved road access are equally shared. It would be interesting to know, for example,

whether women and men put the same emphasis on rural road access as the overall development priority.¹² This seems important given that rural roads absorb most of *Gewog* capital budgets and administrative time, leaving little for other matters under the local government mandate.¹³ Such other matters include, for example, local footpaths and mule tracks, water supply, waste disposal, and community primary schools, some of which could be considered priorities by women because of the impact on their household responsibilities and workloads.¹⁴

Other issues that could be monitored when assessing the impact of increased road access and how to maximize benefits include

- the extent to which increased road access has reduced time and effort for fuelwood collection (a household task done mainly by women and estimated to absorb about one person-month per year);¹⁵
- whether and how road access has increased access to health services, particularly for regular and emergency care to reduce maternal mortality (e.g., are transport services for this available); and
- whether opportunities and incomes for women have increased as much as those of men as a result of the potential for easier access to markets to buy inputs and sell products, and if not, what are the gender-specific constraints.

More generally, all socioeconomic assessments related to roads (including assessment of impacts, needs, satisfaction, etc.) would be more informative if they were sex-disaggregated.

► *Increased road access entails potential costs and hazards*

While the benefits of increased road access and population mobility have received considerable attention, there are also potential costs and hazards. Local government officials

⁹ Ministry of Information and Communications. 2013. *Bhutan Transport 2040: Integrated Strategic Vision*. Prepared in 2011 with the support of ADB.

¹⁰ Eleventh Round Table (footnote 2), p. 42.

¹¹ Eleventh Round Table (footnote 2), p. 41.

¹² Such insights are not available when views on development priorities are collected by household (which assumes that household members all have the same views), as was done by, e.g., National Statistics Bureau. *Bhutan Living Standards Survey, 2012*. p. 69.

¹³ Technical Study (footnote 3), pp. 36–37.

¹⁴ Gross National Happiness Commission. 2009. *Local Government Development Planning Manual*. Tool 8. p. 49.

¹⁵ Ministry of Economic Affairs. 2010. *Integrated Energy Management Master Plan for Bhutan*. p. 8.

consulted in relation to this report noted that potential costs included increased migration, particularly of young men; introduction of changes in lifestyles that increase the risks of domestic violence; and increased risks of trafficking and sexual harassment by outsiders.¹⁶

Increased mobility between areas also facilitates the dispersion of viruses and infections, including sexually transmitted infections (of which there is already a high incidence in Bhutan).¹⁷ While HIV prevalence remains low in Bhutan, emerging risks and vulnerabilities have been recognized. Bhutan's 2012 AIDS progress report notes that construction projects for hydropower plants and expansion of the road network have brought with them increased demands for paid sex by immigrant workers, truckers, and transport workers, leading to an increase in infections among female sex workers.¹⁸ High-risk behavior characterizing migrant workers and truck drivers has been recognized in international studies as making the transport sector a critical vector in HIV transmission.¹⁹

► ***Women seem to carry a disproportionate share of routine maintenance of farm roads***

One benefit specific to women of increased road access that was highlighted in a recent study was that better road access relieved women from the duty of contributing unpaid labor to transport construction materials for schools, health units, and other infrastructure. As the study report put it, the roads “brought great relief to women from carrying loads for developmental works.”²⁰

On the other hand, new farm roads also require maintenance. Current practice is that once completed, farm roads are handed over to user groups made up of members of the beneficiary community, who then undertake

routine maintenance. This includes tasks such as clearing the road of obstructions, including minor slides; clearing culverts, cross-drainage structures, and side drains; collecting and transporting materials for road surface repair; and carrying out the road surface repairs, masonry work, and clearing of vegetation.²¹

The initial approach to this maintenance was that it would be done by voluntary labor, both to reduce costs and to promote a sense of ownership by local road users. Guidance materials prepared in 2009 show that the Department of Agriculture was concerned about problems with this approach, including the conflict with labor demands for agriculture (particularly when community members were also being asked to participate in multiple development activities), and therefore outlined a number of alternatives.²²

However, a recent study found that maintenance was being done on a “voluntary” and unpaid basis and that it was mostly done by women (who constitute the majority of unpaid family workers and thus may be presumed to be more available than those with waged work). This road maintenance work tended to conflict with labor demand in the peak agricultural season, as this is when the damage to roads caused by monsoon rains is greatest. Further, the informal nature of the work meant that it was not covered by labor legislation or occupational health and safety protection, so workers did not benefit from minimum working and safety standards, or from compensation in case of injury or death. The study strongly recommended that responsibility for farm road maintenance should be assigned to *Genwog* administrations rather than user groups, and that *Genwogs* should be assured an annual budget for farm road maintenance so that the maintenance work could be done on a paid rather than voluntary basis. It was argued that this approach would increase the professionalism of the work and the sustainability of the farm

¹⁶ Consultation workshops in two *Dzongkhags*, Sarpang and Samdrup Jongkhar, October 2013.

¹⁷ Ministry of Health. *Global AIDS Response Progress Reporting 2012: Bhutan*. Submitted to UNAIDS. p.1.

¹⁸ Global Aids Response (footnote 17), p. 14.

¹⁹ GTZ. 2005. *Why Transport Matters: Contributions of the Transport Sector Towards Achieving the Millennium Development Goals*. Eschborn, Germany. pp. 7–8.

²⁰ Technical Study (footnote 3), pp. 19, drawing on an evaluation of a major World Bank rural roads project.

²¹ Major maintenance is a *Dzongkhag* responsibility. Ministry of Works and Human Settlement. 2009. *Guidelines on Road Classification System and Delineation of Construction and Maintenance Responsibilities*. pp. 10–11.

²² Ministry of Agriculture and Forests, Department of Agriculture. 2009. *Farm Road Maintenance Manual. Manual B: Modalities of Maintenance*. Section 1.3.

road network, as well as addressing the social concerns described.²³

► ***Few women are involved in local decision making about rural roads and related matters***

Elected and administrative officials at the *Gewog* and *Dzongkhag* level have broad planning and decision-making responsibilities about farm and feeder roads. However, elected bodies at both levels include very few women. After the 2011 local elections, women accounted for just 8.2% of all members and leaders elected to the *Gewog Tshogde* (the local development committee), and only one of 205 *Gewogs* elected a woman *Gup* (head of *Gewog Tshogde*). As the *Dzongkhag* council consists of the heads and deputy heads of *Gewog Tshogde*, women are underrepresented at that level also.²⁴

Until more women stand for office and gain the support of their communities, it will be important for local governments to seek other means to ensure that women's views are taken into account in decisions related to farm and feeder roads. This is important because of the significance of decisions about farm roads. Consider, for example, decisions about the location and routes of these roads. The current practice is that land for the road is contributed by those who will benefit, and no compensation is paid even if the contribution entails loss or fragmentation of productive land.²⁵ No information is available on the process or considerations used by the *Gewog Tshogde* in making such decisions, but it could be imagined that there would be frequent instances in which the interests of a landowner need to be balanced against the costs of construction and maintenance of a diversion from an optimal route. In this context, one issue is whether the costs of land provided—considering both the value of the land (which is rising with greater land scarcity) and economic opportunities foregone (uses of and income from the land)—are equitably shared among women and men in the community.

Another issue on which it seems important to ensure that the views of women are heard is how road maintenance is to be undertaken, who supplies the community labor, and whether it is done on a paid or voluntary basis.

► ***Improved transport services and pedestrian facilities are also critical to mobility***

Despite significant increases in the number of cars on the road, few households own vehicles of any type. In 2012, 36% of urban households had a family car (up from 24% in 2007), 5% had a motorbike or scooter, and 9% owned a bicycle. Ownership rates were much lower in rural areas, where 11% of households had a family car in 2012 (up from 4% in 2007), and even fewer had a motorbike or bicycle.²⁶

Public transport services have an important role in this context. Very little if any analysis has been done on gender-specific needs and adequacy of services in either urban or rural areas in Bhutan. Issues could include affordability; whether routes and frequency are appropriate to the locations and time requirements of the economic activities of women as well as men; and whether services also facilitate access to schools, child care, health clinics, etc.

Pedestrian facilities also remain important in both rural and urban areas, though they seem to receive less attention than any other form of aid to mobility. In urban areas, they include sidewalks and footpaths for easier movement and safety on roadways shared with vehicles, as well as street lighting. In rural areas, travel on foot within communities probably remains the predominant means of movement, even where access to a road facilitates links outside the community. In this context, properly maintained footpaths can contribute to reducing the time and effort to reach fuelwood sources, fields, and services such as extension or local health centers, all of which are particularly important for women given their household responsibilities and long working days.

²³ Technical Study (footnote 3), pp. 18, 27, 37.

²⁴ National Commission for Women and Children, and UN Women Bhutan. 2012. *Women's Political Participation in 2011 Local Government Elections*. p. 14.

²⁵ Technical Study (footnote 3), p. 20.

²⁶ National Statistics Bureau. *Bhutan Living Standards Survey 2012 Report*. Tables 8.2, 8.3. *Bhutan Living Standards Survey 2007 Report*. Table 8.1

Box 1 provides some insight into how important walking remains as a means of transport in many areas of the country. While 67% of rural households are within one hour of a motorable road, another 10% are still more than six hours walk away from the nearest road (with considerable variation among *Dzongkhags*).

► **Women's transport safety can be enhanced through infrastructure and transport planning**

An important transport safety issue for women is the ability to reach a destination without fear of harassment, whether they are pedestrians, in passenger waiting areas, or in public buses. Infrastructure decisions, such as the provision and placement of bus shelters and street lighting, can contribute to ensuring personal safety. Separate male and female toilets in transit and roadside facilities are also important. Transport planning can also contribute to women's transport safety through approaches such as ensuring regular service, avoiding overcrowding of waiting areas and vehicles, providing special seating for pregnant women (as well as seniors and the handicapped), and ensuring adequate training and supervision of bus drivers on the protection of the female clientele.

► **Working conditions for manual road workers, particularly women, merit review**

Women as well as men work in road construction. Most women road construction workers are likely to be members of the National Work Force (NWF), that is, Bhutanese who are employed by government agencies for projects or works executed directly by those agencies. The establishment of the NWF reflects the particularities of development in Bhutan. From the early stages of road construction in the 1960s, a large number of workers, both skilled and unskilled, have been Indian. This was because the traditional subsistence economy did not have sufficient labor to spare for road construction. Some Bhutanese were employed but in a rotating system of contributions from communities in order not to disrupt the continuity of agricultural work, and were paid at rates that did not attract workers away from the land. This approach was replaced in the 1980s with the establishment of the NWF,

Box 1. For one-third of rural households, getting to a motorable road still involves a substantial walk

Proportion of households by walking time taken to reach the nearest motor road, 2012, by Dzongkhag, and the number of rural households (HH) by Dzongkhag, 2012

Dzongkhag	< 1 hour	1–3 hours	4–6 hours	> 6 hours	No. HH
Bumthang	95.7%	4.3%	0.0%	0.0%	1,364
Chhukhaa	58.9%	13.2%	8.3%	19.6%	3,369
Dagan	70.8%	21.4%	1.0%	7.2%	3,881
Gasa	34.9%	0.0%	0.0%	65.1%	542
Ha	79.6%	0.0%	0.0%	20.4%	1,461
Lhuentse	48.6%	25.6%	20.4%	5.7%	2,360
Mongar	66.0%	18.4%	9.6%	6.0%	5,290
Paro	98.1%	1.9%	0.0%	0.0%	3,500
Pemagatshel	48.3%	36.1%	7.3%	8.3%	4,271
Punakha	83.3%	16.3%	0.4%	0.0%	2,121
S/Jongkhar	40.7%	30.5%	13.0%	15.7%	4,066
Samtse	42.3%	27.5%	15.3%	14.7%	6,114
Sarpang	81.9%	3.5%	3.4%	10.9%	4,504
Thimphu	91.4%	0.0%	0.1%	8.5%	2,021
Trashigang	80.0%	7.0%	4.8%	8.3%	7,631
Trashiyangtse	68.3%	17.8%	8.3%	5.0%	3,286
Trongsa	75.7%	7.2%	13.5%	3.6%	1,686
Tsirang	82.4%	15.3%	1.6%	0.4%	3,251
Wangdue	69.2%	20.6%	5.8%	4.4%	2,860
Zhemgang	33.5%	4.6%	7.2%	54.6%	209
Bhutan	67.3%	15.6%	6.7%	10.3%	65,677

< = less than, > = more than, no. = number, HH = households

Source: Ministry of Agriculture and Forests. 2012. *Agriculture Survey 2011 (Vol. I): Dzongkhag Level Statistics*. Tables 1 and 38. Table in source states date as 2012.

which recruited landless Bhutanese to work on the roads (and some other public works, such as the construction and renovation of *dzongs*).²⁷

Wage rates for the NWF are set by the Ministry of Labour and Human Resources. A circular in July 2011 provided for a substantial increase so that the least skilled category earned Nu165 (\$2.75) per day and the most skilled Nu240 (\$4.00) per day. These are minimum wage rates and are set separately from the national minimum wage for all workers, which was fixed at the same time at Nu100 per day (\$1.65).²⁸

²⁷ S. Kinga. 2005. Youth and Unemployment in Bhutan. In L. Dorji and S. Kinga, eds. 2005. *Youth in Bhutan: Education, Employment, Development*. Thimphu: Centre for Bhutan Studies. pp. 53–55.

²⁸ The Ministry of Labour and Human Resources published two circulars on 15 July 2011, to take effect on 1 August 2011: MOLHR/EOM/11/150: Revision of National Work Force (NWF) Wages Rates, and

The Department of Roads maintains about 2,500 NWF workers as a regular workforce, about half of whom are women. The NWF are migrant workers of a sort, living in semipermanent dwellings with toilet and cooking facilities, and located near schools if possible. According to some department staff, many of these workers remain with the NWF for many years and some seem to have accumulated significant assets as NWF workers.²⁹ However, limited information is available about the living and working conditions of NWF workers, and about how women fare compared to men. A recent study suggested that such issues merit further attention. It noted that women tended to be employed at the most menial levels in road construction and maintenance works, and that the absence of the protective equipment recommended by the Department of Labour was particularly marked among women doing such work.³⁰

Findings of the 2010 survey for the gross national happiness index also suggest that further investigation of the NWF may be warranted. According to the survey, happiness among the NWF is lower than for any other occupational group, including farmers, the military, and the unemployed.³¹

► ***Employment in the transport sector remains largely male***

It is difficult to obtain a reliable estimate from employment data about the number of Bhutanese (or the proportion of women) who make their living from the transport sector, but the available data suggest that women remain underrepresented. For example, the 2012 Labour Force Survey found that women accounted for 12.3% of workers in the category “transport, storage and communications,” which is considerably below their share of overall employment (52.0%) or their share of

the nonagricultural employment (33.6%).³² There is also transport-related employment in the civil service, including jobs related to policy, project planning and implementation, and service delivery; but civil service employment data are not available by sex for sectors or occupations (although aggregate data show that only 33% of public servants were women in 2012).³³

But while women are still in a minority among professionals in transport-related fields, Box 2 shows that they constitute an increasing proportion of graduates with engineering diplomas and degrees from institutes in Bhutan. Public and private sector employers in road construction, transport services, and related businesses will not be making optimum use of the human resources available if they do not give full consideration of the potential of these women graduates.

Government Commitments to Support Women or Gender Equality in the Sector

Transport policy and planning documents contain few gender-specific commitments. Recent major initiatives in support of policy development, such as one for an integrated strategic vision for 2040, make no reference to the possibility of gender-related differences in transport priorities, needs, and uses in either rural or urban areas.³⁴

However, policy and planning documents in the sector emphasize the role of transport investments in improving the mobility of people and goods and thus their quality of life and material conditions. This orientation is conducive to raising the questions that are important to taking a gender perspective in transport. This would include questions such as the following: What types of opportunities does a particular transport investment or intervention provide? Who can take advantage of them? What services could be

MOLHR/EOM/11/150: Fixation of National Minimum Wage (NMW) Rate. (The ngultrum is on par with the Indian rupee. In October 2013, \$1 = approximately Nu60.)

²⁹ Meeting with departmental staff, January 2013.

³⁰ Technical Study (footnote 3), pp. 22–23.

³¹ K. Ura et al. 2012. *An Extensive Analysis of the GNH Index*. Thimphu: Centre for Bhutan Studies. pp. 52–53. The analysis notes that the small sample size means that findings by occupational category are only illustrative.

³² Ministry of Labour and Human Resources. 2012. *Labour Force Survey Report, 2012*. Tables 7.0, 7.21.

This category includes transport and communication services but not road construction and maintenance.

³³ Royal Civil Service Commission. *Civil Service Statistics December 2012*. Table 1.

³⁴ Bhutan Transport 2040 (footnote 9).

brought into the community with improved transport, and who would benefit from these services? What needs are not being met? Are there differences between women and men in relation to any of these questions? Can they be addressed to achieve equitable outcomes?

Also relevant to employment in road construction and in transport services are the provisions of the Labour and Employment Act of Bhutan, 2007 that prohibit discrimination by sex in recruitment, training, wages, and working conditions; and prohibit sexual harassment in the workplace.³⁵

Looking Forward: Issues and Opportunities to Consider

This section highlights a number of issues and opportunities that merit consideration as part of transport sector strategies currently under development.

► *Working and living conditions of the National Work Force*

Since the establishment of the NWF several decades ago, there has been considerable evolution in Bhutan's labor force policies and practices, including those related to equal opportunities. However, it seems that there may have been some lag in adapting the management of the NWF to these new requirements. For example, it was only in 2011 that uniform wage rates by skill level replaced wage rates that were lower for women than men.³⁶ A structured inquiry into the working and living conditions of the NWF could be a useful means to identify whether further changes are required to improve the conditions and productivity of these workers.

Such a study could consider various aspects of working and living conditions and how they differ by sex (including distribution by occupational and skill levels, opportunities afforded and taken for skill upgrading, daily and monthly earnings, accident rates and use of protective equipment, housing

Box 2. Women now account for a substantial proportion of graduates with engineering diplomas and degrees

Proportion of women in the graduating class, selected institutes, 2009–2011

Institute	Women graduating as a percentage of all students			Number of female graduates, 2009–2011
	2009	2010	2011	
Jigme Namgyel Polytechnic (Diplomas in civil, electrical, and mechanical engineering)	21.9%	28.4%	44.0%	89
College of Science and Technology (Bachelor of engineering, civil, and electrical)	22.0%	49.0%	52.5%	93

Source: Ministry of Labour and Human Resources. *Labour Market Information Bulletin*. For 2009: Tables 5.4, 5.5; 2010: Tables 3.4, 3.11; 2011: Table 5.8.

conditions and hygiene facilities, incidence of sexual harassment and domestic violence in living and work spaces, and care options for preschool children and school access for older ones). Also of interest would be workers' knowledge about their employment rights, including the rights of women to equal pay and opportunities.

► *Capacity and management practices in the construction industry*

The 11th plan includes discussion about capacity and management in the construction industry, including the quality of work and the ability to attract Bhutanese workers.³⁷ Another important concern is the capacity to manage human resources effectively and equitably. Gender equality elements that could be included in briefing or training of contractors in this area include

- requirements of national labor legislation about nondiscrimination in recruitment, training, promotion, and pay;
- requirements of occupational health and safety rules, including requirements related to personal protective equipment;
- provisions of the regulation on sexual harassment in the workplace; and
- the importance of separate toilet facilities for women, with adequate privacy.

► *Livelihood and entrepreneurial opportunities related to routine road maintenance*

Concerns about the current practice of relying on “voluntary” and unpaid labor for

³⁵ Appendix B to this chapter provides access information for this act and related documents.

³⁶ Wage rates document on the website of the National Council of Bhutan (document 6 under Rules and Regulations), which was superseded by the circulars cited in footnote 28.

³⁷ 11th plan (footnote 6), Vol. 1, pp. 214–215.

routine maintenance on farm roads include the poor quality of the resulting maintenance and the opportunity cost to the workers (mostly women) because maintenance is most needed when labor demand in agriculture is high. These concerns resulted in a strong recommendation that *Genwogs* rather than road user groups should be responsible for routine maintenance, and that *Geowgs* should be allocated an annual budget for such maintenance to allow workers to be hired.³⁸

Another option would be for *Genwogs* to contract with user or community groups for routine maintenance. Experience in other countries suggests that contracting women's organizations to undertake such maintenance can have positive results on women's incomes and community standing.

In Bhutan, either option would expand women's opportunities to earn income in rural areas where the options are limited, particularly for women. Either option would be a considerable improvement on the obligation to provide unpaid labor. Further

elaboration of these options would benefit from explicit efforts to ensure that women have equitable access to any opportunities for paid work that arise, and that appropriate training, protective equipment, and provisions in case of injury are in place.³⁹

► ***Livelihood and entrepreneurial opportunities in transport services and roadside amenities***

The contribution of expanded road networks to poverty reduction and inclusive growth will depend to some extent on the transport services that facilitate the movement of people and goods on the roads. There are likely to be entrepreneurial opportunities in responding to the need for transport services—for owners and operators of vehicles (minibuses, buses, trucks, etc.)—as well as employment opportunities in such enterprises. Related to this would be opportunities in vehicle repair, supply of parts and fuel, and shops and facilities along roadways. Assisting women to gain equitable access to such opportunities would serve both improved transport and gender equity objectives.

³⁸ Technical Study (footnote 3), pp. 39–41.

³⁹ Contacting of community groups is addressed in the Department of Agriculture's maintenance manual (footnote 22), but without reference to equitable opportunities or working conditions.

APPENDIX A. Tip Sheet on Integrating Gender Perspectives in Analysis and Planning in the Sector		
STEP 1: What are the positive outcomes for women or gender equality that could be achieved through gender mainstreaming?	STEP 2: What are some of the questions we should ask to better understand gender equality issues and women's needs in these areas?	STEP 3: What steps or strategies could be considered or adapted to move forward in these areas?
<p>Expanded rural road access and rural mobility:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Increased access to markets and employment by women → Decreased time and effort for women's work in water and fuel collection 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do local people identify as their transport needs and problems? Are they being asked about needs related to both economic and household or personal activities and how they are met? How do the perspectives of women and men compare? • Will the roads themselves address these concerns? What else is needed to be able to travel on these roads to the destinations or for the purposes identified? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that consultations identify issues and priorities for women and men separately, to better identify and respond to local needs • Plan rural roads for safe use by pedestrians as well as vehicles (pedestrians walking alongside the road, pedestrians seeking to cross busy stretches, etc.) • Consider options for stimulating provision of transport services by women and men of the local communities reached.
<p>Planning for rural and interregional, or intercity transport services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Better awareness and responsiveness to the mobility needs of women → Agencies and staff more capable of assessing and responding to gender-differentiated transport needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are data on transport patterns and needs sex-disaggregated (including journeys taken, by whom, how, why)? • Do managers and planners have the skills to formulate and analyze questions about the gender aspects of transport requirements and the gender implications of transport interventions? • Are transport planners aware that women might have different needs and views on transport priorities, rates, services? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve data systems so that they generate the sex-disaggregated data as inputs to transport planning (i.e., data on needs for and uses of different transport modes, including pedestrian modes). • Provide training or exposure visits to transport planners on gender and transport. • Review consultation policies and practices to ensure outreach to women and better information on women's needs and priorities.
<p>Urban transport plans, infrastructure, and services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Increased ability for women to reach jobs and public services → Increased safety for women on urban streets and urban transport services → Increased affordability of transport for women 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do women reach work, markets, and health services? Are current arrangements adequate, affordable, and safe to use? What are the problems, and what are the implications for women's time use and economic activity? • What are the personal security concerns of urban women in relation to their journeys to work? Are they subject to harassment as pedestrians or transit users? What would be required to reduce this hazard? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore options for a transport approach that results in services that respond to the particular needs of women at different income levels (i.e., through the mix of various types of services, including public buses, taxis, and other private services). • Coordinate transport planning with urban planning to address mobility problems related to different modes (e.g., for pedestrians: poor sidewalks and infrequent safe crossing points). • Make allocations for safety features such as safe waiting areas and lighting in bus bays. • Explore options for public transport pricing that do not penalize short and/or multistop journeys that women tend to take.
<p>Employment in routine road maintenance at the <i>Gewog</i> level:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Pay and better conditions for farm road maintenance work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the opportunity cost of supplying this labor? When and how much is generally required per kilometer of road and per individual? • What are the views of those who are supplying this labor on what is required (e.g., tools, training, and protective gear) to improve the efficiency and safety of this work (by sex)? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set standards for pay and working conditions for community maintenance workers. • Ensure that <i>Gewog</i> administrations are aware of and committed to national standards on equality in employment.

APPENDIX A. Tip Sheet on Integrating Gender Perspectives in Analysis and Planning in the Sector		
STEP 1: What are the positive outcomes for women or gender equality that could be achieved through gender mainstreaming?	⇒	STEP 2: What are some of the questions we should ask to better understand gender equality issues and women's needs in these areas?
<p>New opportunities for employment and entrepreneurship in the provision of transport services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Increased participation of women as transport operators and owners, and as transport professionals → Increased participation of women in providing related goods and services (parts and maintenance) 	⇒	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What opportunities could arise to provide transport services on new roads constructed (e.g., offering services in private vehicles, minibuses, or larger buses)? What services would those service providers need (e.g., parts and maintenance)? Are women participating in such enterprises? • What constraints might women face in becoming owners or operators of enterprises in these areas? Are there government programs related to entrepreneurship or enterprise finance that could address these needs?
<p>Employment policies and practices of public sector authorities responsible for transport:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → More equitable employment opportunities for women 	⇒	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the representation of women on the staff of the national and local agencies responsible for transport and transport services? To what extent have women entered technical, professional, and management jobs? What barriers to entry and promotion can be identified? • Are there opportunities to support greater participation by women at professional, technical, and management levels?
<p>Loss of land or livelihoods due to new infrastructure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Restoration of women's livelihoods and income 	⇒	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are there barriers to women's participation in consultation processes about resettlement plans (related to, e.g., transport availability or costs, household duties, and social pressures related to women's public role)? How can these be overcome? • What will be the impacts of loss of land or resettlement on women's livelihoods? Is land remaining a viable agricultural entity? What is the impact on income from self-employment or trade? • In case of resettlement, are there adequate and affordable transport services to reach places of employment? Is retraining required? • Is the information gathered on property and assets sex-disaggregated? Are women and men informed about their rights in relation to land and/or compensation?
		<p>STEP 3: What steps or strategies could be considered or adapted to move forward in these areas?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set targets for women in any training provided for skilled work or technical services in providing or managing transport services. • Provide information and support to women's enterprises that offer or could offer transport services on roads constructed, or provide products or services to transport providers. • Facilitate contact with government programs supporting entrepreneurship.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop agency-level equal opportunity strategies (for recruitment, promotion, training, and working conditions). • Build links between transport sector agencies and vocational and professional training institutes to support increased participation and subsequent employment of women.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a consultation strategy that addresses the barriers identified to ensure that women in various types of households are reached (households headed by women, widows, married women, and single women). • Develop and fund a plan to facilitate reestablishment of livelihoods (responding to findings of analysis on needs).

APPENDIX B. Useful Resources for Gender Analysis in the Sector

Bhutan-based background information and gender-specific resources

Useful sector overviews and background documents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ministry of Information and Communications. 2013. <i>Bhutan Transport 2040: Integrated Strategic Vision</i>. www.moic.gov.bt/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/Pamphlet-transport-vision.pdf. A more detailed background document with the same title is available from ADB at www.adb.org/publications/bhutan-transport-2040-integrated-strategic-vision Ministry of Works and Human Settlement. 2009. <i>Guidelines on Road Classification System and Delineation of Construction and Maintenance Responsibilities</i>. www.mowhs.gov.bt/wp-content/uploads/2010/11/English_Road_Guidelines.pdf
Relevant legislation, policy statements and strategy papers (other than five-year plans)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Economic Development Policy, 2010</i>. www.gnhc.gov.bt/wp-content/uploads/2012/04/EDP.pdf <i>Labour and Employment Act of Bhutan, 2007</i>. http://oag.gov.bt/resources/acts/ or www.molhr.gov.bt/publication/labouract.pdf Regulation on Sexual Harassment. Included in <i>Regulations on Working Conditions</i>, pp 65–71. www.molhr.gov.bt/molhrsite/wp-content/uploads/2012/07/regulation_working_condt.pdf <i>General Rules and Regulations on Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) in Construction, Manufacturing, Mining and Service Industries, 2006</i>. www.molhr.gov.bt/publication/ohs.pdf <i>Regulation on Occupational Health, Safety and Welfare, 2012</i>. www.molhr.gov.bt/molhrsite/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/Regulation-on-Occupational-Health-Safety-and-Welfare-2012.pdf

Other resources

Research and analyses on gender and transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> J. Babinard. 2011. World Bank Gender Transport Surveys: An Overview. <i>World Bank Transport Notes</i>. TRN-43, September. go.worldbank.org/O51149H4G0 Gendered Innovations. 2013. <i>Public Transportation: Rethinking and Theories</i>. http://genderedinnovations.stanford.edu/case-studies/transportation.html C. Duchène. 2011. Gender and Transport. International Transport Forum Discussion Paper 2011–2011. www.internationaltransportforum.org/jtrc/DiscussionPapers/DP201111.pdf D. Peters. 2001. Gender and Transport in Less Developed Countries: A Background Paper in Preparation for CSD-9. www.earthsummit2002.org/workshop/Gender%20&%20Transport%20S%20DP.pdf D. Peters. 2011. Gender and Sustainable Urban Mobility. Prepared for the <i>UN-HABITAT Global Report on Human Settlements 2013</i>. www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2012/cc/bgrd/CC20_1_app3_24.pdf S. Mitra-Sarkar and P. Partheeban. 2010. Abandon All Hope, Ye Who Enter Here: Understanding the Problem of “Eve Teasing” in Chennai, India. In <i>Women's Issues in Transportation. Summary of the 4th International Conference</i>. September 2009. Vol. 2, Technical Papers. pp. 74–84. onlinepubs.trb.org/onlinepubs/conf/cp46v2.pdf
Guides and case studies on gender and transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> World Bank. 2010. <i>Making Transport Work for Women and Men: Tools for Task Teams</i>. Practical manual. go.worldbank.org/UW1GDCX260 World Bank. 2010. <i>Mainstreaming Gender in Road Transport: Operational Guidance for World Bank Staff</i>. Transport Papers, Transport Sector Board. go.worldbank.org/C2EOVAJRF0 World Bank. 2006. <i>Gender and Transport Resource Guide</i>. A useful resource consisting of six interactive modules that aim to clarify issues, outline approaches, provide links to relevant studies and examples, etc. www4.worldbank.org/afr/ssatp/Resources/HTML/Gender-RG/index.html. Also see World Bank gender and transport website: go.worldbank.org/EQK4CKYNI0 Asian Development Bank. 2011. <i>Gender Equality Results Case Studies: Bhutan</i>. Road Improvement Project: Improving the Well-Being of Road Workers. pp. 23–30 in www.adb.org/publications/gender-equality-results-case-studies-bhutan Asian Development Bank. 2011. <i>Community-Based Routine Maintenance of Roads by Women's Groups: Guide for Communications Bureaus</i>. www.adb.org/publications/community-based-routine-maintenance-roads-womens-groups-guide-communications-bureaus. See also the complementary manual targeted to the maintenance groups: <i>Community-Based Routine Maintenance of Roads by Women's Groups: Manual for Maintenance Groups</i>. www.adb.org/publications/community-based-routine-maintenance-roads-womens-groups-manual-maintenance-groups?ref=themes/gender/publications

Toward Gender-Equitable Opportunities and Outcomes:

Urban Development

Summary	
Sector context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The urban population is projected to rise to 50% of the total by 2020. Rapid urbanization is putting pressure on current centers. The 2008 National Urbanization Strategy sets out a growth center approach aimed at balanced regional development. As yet, only four urban areas have full municipal status, but some 30 urban plans are in process with local government involvement.
Gender equality issues relevant to sector activities and outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rural–urban migration patterns may be skewed toward men. Unemployment rates are higher and opportunities fewer for women in urban areas. Limited child care options may also be a constraint to urban employment for women. Urban services are important for all but particularly for women. Poverty is lower in urban areas but is an emerging issue. Domestic violence and tolerance of it are also urban issues. Few women participate in local decision making.
Government commitments to support women or gender equality in the sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The national government recognizes the desirability of more balanced representation of women and men in local government. Planning by local governments uses the same framework as the national five-year plan, which includes gender mainstreaming. Local governments are also bound by constitutional commitments and national policies for gender equality.
Looking forward: issues and opportunities to consider	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data and information needs for informed urban and spatial planning Women’s interests and economic activities (women as actors and agents, not just a “vulnerable group”) Gender perspectives on spatial and infrastructure planning Women’s participation in employment opportunities in urban and infrastructure planning and management Making cities and towns safe places for women
Appendixes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tip Sheet on Integrating Gender Perspectives in the Sector Useful Resources on Gender Analysis in the Sector

Sector Context

The annual growth of the urban population in Bhutan has been as high as 7.3% in recent years and the urban population is projected to increase to at least 50% of the total population by 2020. Part of the increase is due to natural growth, which can be expected to be higher in urban than rural areas given the number of young people migrating to complete their education and then remaining to find work. Rural–urban migration is also a response to higher levels of poverty and fewer opportunities in rural and farming communities.¹

The adverse effects of rapid urbanization being experienced in urban centers were summarized in 2009 in the Tenth Five-Year Plan as including “...water shortages, housing scarcity, sanitation and waste disposal problems, deteriorating air quality through pollution and the proliferation of squatter settlements in sensitive environment areas.”²

Another concern is the loss of agricultural land to urban uses, particularly given the relatively limited additional land suitable for agriculture and the constitutional requirement to maintain 60% forest cover.³ Food security issues include the loss of land and the labor shortages already being experienced in farming communities as a result of rural–urban migration.⁴

In this context, the 2008 Bhutan National Urbanization Strategy aimed for balanced regional development that seeks to realize the benefits of urban dynamism while mitigating existing disparities by “tapping the synergies of rural–urban interdependence.”⁵ The Eleventh Five-Year Plan reiterates the strategy of focusing on a human settlements approach that aims for balanced regional development and the improvement in the quality of life and socioeconomic well-being of both rural

and urban residents.⁶ Challenges that the plan aims to address include the lack of legislation for national spatial planning and the shortage of professionals in critical fields.⁷

The national urban system envisaged includes the two national cities (Thimphu and Gelephu), five regional growth centers, 16 *Dzongkhags* (district centers), 12 medium-sized towns, 23 small towns or *Gewogs* centers, and four corridors that link the cities and regional and national centers.⁸

An urban area with a specific municipal status is called a *Thromde* (Box 1 and Box 2). Powers and functions were set out in the Local Government Act, 2009, and further clarified in the *Thromde* Rules drawn up the same year.⁹ A Class A *Thromde* has an elected council (*Thromde Tshogde*) and is supported by a secretariat. As yet, there are only four Class A *Thromde* (Thimphu, Phuentsholing, Gelephu, and Samdrup Jongkhar). *Thromde Tshogde* are responsible for essential services and for land use and development plans. They have regulatory authority over health and safety matters, advertising, land use and building activities, commercial activities, and squatter settlements.

Class B and *Yenlag Thromde* are administered directly by the *Dzongkhag* in which they are located and *Dzongkhags* are charged with supporting their evolution into the Class A category.

Several national agencies have responsibilities related to urban policy, development, and governance. The Department of Human Settlement of the Ministry of Works and Human Settlement provides technical support to cities, towns, and villages in formulating development plans, while the same ministry’s Department of Engineering Services provides services and technical backup to local governments (*Dzongkhags*, *Gewogs*, and *Thromdes*). The Ministry of Home and Cultural Affairs includes the Department of Local Governance, whose role is to build the capacity of local governments. The National Housing Development Corporation pursues the objective of safe and affordable housing.

¹ Ministry of Works and Human Settlement. 2008. *Bhutan National Urbanization Strategy*. pp. 13–14, 35.

² Gross National Happiness Commission. 2009. *Tenth Five-Year Plan, 2008–2013*. Vol. 1. p. 34.

³ Urbanization Strategy (footnote 1), pp. 21–22.

⁴ Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and World Bank. 2012. *Bhutan Agriculture Sector Review: Vol. 1. Issues, Institutions, Policies*. pp. 38–41. Rome.

⁵ As summarized in the 10th plan (footnote 2), p. 34.

⁶ Gross National Happiness Commission. 2013. *Eleventh Five-Year Plan, 2013–2018*. Vol. 1. p. 217.

⁷ 11th plan (footnote 6), pp. 219–220.

⁸ 10th plan (footnote 2), p. 35.

⁹ See Appendix B for full citation and website address.

Box 1. Glossary of key terms in local government

Terms related to <i>Thromde</i> (municipalities)	
<i>Thromde Tshogde</i>	elected municipal committee, Class A <i>Thromde</i>
<i>Thuemis</i>	elected members of the <i>Thromde Tshogde</i> , 7–10 persons
<i>Thrompon</i>	head of <i>Thromde Tshogde</i> , directly elected
<i>Tshogchung</i>	appointed committee in Class B and <i>Yenlag Thromde</i>
<i>Tshogpa</i>	general term for association or committee
<i>Tshogpas</i>	term for member of an association of committee
Other terms related to local government	
<i>Dzongkhag</i>	district (20 in Bhutan)
<i>Dzongdag</i>	district administrator (appointed by national government)
<i>Dzongkhag Tshogdu</i>	elected district council
<i>Genog</i>	county (205 across Bhutan)
<i>Genog Tshogde</i>	elected county committee, 5–8 persons plus <i>Gup</i> and <i>Mangmi</i>
<i>Gup</i>	head of a <i>Genog Tshogde</i> , directly elected
<i>Mangmi</i>	deputy head of <i>Genog Tshogde</i> , directly elected
<i>Chiwog</i>	a unit under a <i>Genog</i>
Source: Compiled from the <i>Constitution of Bhutan</i> , <i>Local Government Act</i> , 2009; and Ministry of Works and Human Settlement. <i>Thromde Rules</i> , 2011.	

Box 2. Criteria for *Thromde* (municipal) status

<i>Dzongkhag Thromde Class A</i>	Resident population: >10,000 Population density: 1,000 persons per km ² or more Area: not less than 5 km ² Other: 50% or more of population dependent on nonprimary activities
<i>Dzongkhag Thromde Class B</i>	Resident population: >5,000 Population density: 300 persons per km ² or more Area: not less than 1 km ² Other: 50% or more of population dependent on nonprimary activities; significant commercial, industrial, or institutional center
<i>Yenlag Thromde</i>	Resident population: >1,500 Area: not less than 50 acres Other: 50% or more of population dependent on nonprimary activities
< = less than, > = more than, km ² = square kilometers. Note: population counted by residence, not census registration. Source: Ministry of Works and Human Settlement. <i>Thromde Rules</i> , 2011.	

(See also chapters on transport, private sector development, and work and unemployment.)

Gender Equality Issues Relevant to Sector Activities and Outcomes

► *Rural–urban migration patterns may be skewed toward men*

From the limited information available, there appear to be more men than women among rural–urban migrants. The 2005 census,

which provides the most recent complete account, found that there were more men than women in most towns across the country—in many cases 10% more men and in some cases 30% or even 50% more men.¹⁰ Some of the skewed ratios may reflect significant roads, hydroelectric, or other infrastructure projects under way at the time of the census, which would have brought in many male workers, some of them foreign. However, the widespread predominance of men in the towns suggests a broader pattern of male migration. An often-cited study based on earlier data had found that 60% of rural–urban migrants were men.¹¹

Skewed migration patterns raise concerns about emerging or widening disparities between women and men in opportunities. If women are less likely to migrate due to fewer urban opportunities, they remain in the less-productive and low-income agriculture sector, which is already experiencing a labor shortfall due to the migration of men.

The period since the census has been one of major socioeconomic change, including continued rapid urbanization and large increases in the proportion of women among secondary and tertiary students and graduates. Male–female migration patterns may also have changed in this period. The 2015 census seems rather long to wait for better information to assess the implications for women and gender equality of such changes.

► *Unemployment rates are higher and opportunities fewer for women in urban areas*

Urban unemployment rates have consistently been higher among women than men. In 2012, the unemployment rate was 5.6% for women but only 2.0% for men, and it was higher for women in each age category (Box 3). In urban areas there are also more unemployed women than unemployed men at every level of completed education (Box 4). These findings suggest that the labor market is not free of discrimination.

¹⁰ National Statistics Bureau. *Population and Housing Census of Bhutan, 2005*. Table 3.7.

¹¹ Gross National Happiness Commission and National Commission for Women and Children. *National Plan of Action for Gender 2008–2013*. p. 35, citing a 2005 study by the Ministry of Agriculture on rural–urban migration, one of the few on the subject.

Looking at the types of enterprises in which employed women and men are found (Box 5), women are in a very clear minority in jobs with government and public corporations—a sector which, together with the army, accounted for 46% of urban employment in 2012. The profile of current government employees reflects hiring decisions over several decades during which greater numbers of men than women achieved an education. However, labor market data show that women now constitute a substantial proportion of educated jobseekers. In 2009–2011, women accounted for 45% of jobseekers with a general graduate degree, and 52% of those with education to class XII (urban and rural combined).¹²

Box 5 also shows that an important area of economic activity for urban women is private business, which includes employment, self-employment, and entrepreneurship. Other surveys have found that women are active as entrepreneurs in a range of size and activity categories (although there is limited if any separate data for urban areas).¹³

► **Limited child care options may also constrain urban women's employment opportunities**

The establishment of private child care centers in urban areas has been encouraged by the Ministry of Education since the Ninth Five-Year Plan, and by 2012 there were 29 private centers and another 5 in workplaces caring for about 1,050 children in total.¹⁴ However, considering that in 2012 there were some 18,406 children under age four in urban areas,¹⁵ there are clearly many children who need to be looked after if both parents are in the workforce, particularly for households living far from extended families (including recent migrants).

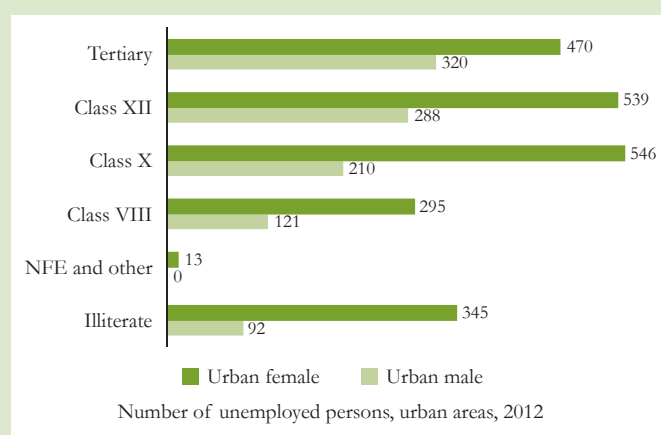
There is very little information about the extent to which the limited child care options pose problems for working parents, and particularly for women's earning opportunities.

Box 3. Urban unemployment rates are higher for women than men in all age groups

Age groups	Unemployment rate, 2012	
	Urban male	Urban female
15–19	18.1	20.8
20–24	11.2	13.4
25–29	2.6	6.2
30+	0.4	2.0

Source: Ministry of Labour and Human Resources. *Labour Force Survey Report, 2012*. Calculated from data in Table 2.2, p. 36.

Box 4. There are more unemployed urban women than unemployed urban men at all education levels

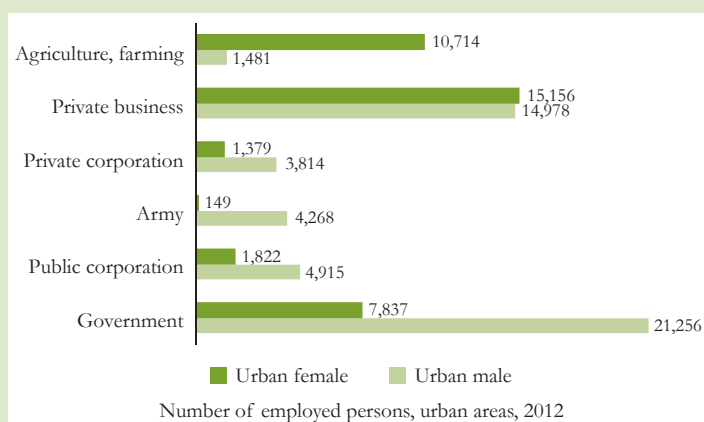


Number of unemployed persons, urban areas, 2012

NFE = nonformal education

Source: Ministry of Labour and Human Resources. *Labour Force Survey Report, 2012*. Table 17.1, pp. 92–93.

Box 5. Employed women and men are found in different enterprises



Number of employed persons, urban areas, 2012

Source: Ministry of Labour and Human Resources. *Labour Force Survey Report, 2012*. Table 3.2, p. 38.

¹² See chapter on work and unemployment, Box 8.

¹³ See chapter on private enterprise, Box 4.

¹⁴ Ministry of Education. 2012. *Annual Education Statistics, 2012*. pp. 1–2, 20.

¹⁵ National Statistics Bureau. *Bhutan Living Standards Survey 2012 Report* (BLSS 2012). Table A3.5.

Box 6. Most urban dwellers have access to an improved water source and many also have access to improved sanitation facilities

Percentage of the urban population in each *Dzongkhag* with access to improved water source and improved sanitation facility, 2012

	Improved water source	Improved sanitation
Bumthang	100.0	82.3
Chhukha	99.6	97.1
Dagana	100.0	86.4
Gasa	100.0	83.3
Haa	100.0	100.0
Lhuentse	96.2	96.2
Monggar	98.2	94.6
Paro	100.0	98.5
Pema Gatshel	100.0	89.3
Punakha	99.0	95.9
Samdrup Jongkhar	99.0	94.0
Samtse	98.5	87.8
Sarpang	97.6	97.6
Thimphu	99.6	97.1
Trashigang	100.0	94.3
Trashigang Yangtse	100.0	87.0
Trongsa	100.0	82.8
Tsirang	100.0	100.0
Wangdue Phodrang	99.5	95.8
Zhemgang	100.0	97.3
All urban Bhutan	99.3	95.5

Source: National Statistics Bureau. *Bhutan Living Standards Survey, 2012 Report*. Table A3.68.

However, data from the 2012 Labour Force Survey show that in urban areas, women's labor force participation rate is slightly higher than that of men at age 20–24, but for each of the 5-year age groups between 25 and 44, women's rates of participation are 20%–30% less than those of men. (This is not the case in rural areas.)¹⁶ Reasons for this discrepancy were not explored. The 2012 Bhutan Living Standards Survey asked about reasons for not working or not looking for a job, and found that 93% of urban women aged 25–34 and 99% of women aged 35–44 cited “house or family duties.” (For men the figures are 20% for those aged 25–34 and 23% for those aged

35–44.)¹⁷ While “house and family duties” could cover duties other than child care, child care could be expected to be a major factor in the childbearing years.

A troubling finding of the Bhutan Multiple Indicator Survey, 2010 was that 8% of urban children younger than 5 were either left alone or in the care of another child under the age of 10 in the week before the survey, and this was more likely to have occurred in poorer households.¹⁸ Again, the reason for this was not explored. It is possible that a shortage of suitable child care options by a parent who needs to earn an income could contribute to this situation.

► **Urban services are important for all, but particularly for women**

Most urban dwellers in most parts of the country have access to an improved water source (Box 6). For most urban households, access is through a water pipe to the house or compound.¹⁹ However, the problem of water shortages and erratic supply in urban and other settlements was highlighted throughout the 11th plan.²⁰ The plan also notes problems with urban water quality that result from water sources being compromised by surface drainage, gray water from domestic households, and seepage from septic tanks.²¹

The need for action on solid waste management in urban areas is also evident in the plan.²² Waste management issues identified by many *Dzongkhags* include a lack of facilities such as disposal sites, garbage trucks, and waste bins and also limited community participation in waste management.²³

There is a gender dimension to poor access or quality of basic water, sanitation, and waste services because they increase the time and effort required for household tasks that are generally done by women, including cooking, laundry, household hygiene, and

¹⁷ BLSS 2012 (footnote 15), Table A3.37.

¹⁸ National Statistics Bureau. *Bhutan Multiple Indicator Survey, 2010* (BMIS 2010). pp. 129–137.

¹⁹ BLSS 2012 (footnote 15), p. 51.

²⁰ 11th plan (footnote 6), pp. 39, 118–119, 212, 220.

²¹ 11th plan (footnote 6), p. 237.

²² 11th plan (footnote 6), pp. 39, 220.

²³ Gross National Happiness Commission. 2013. *Framework to Mainstream Gender, Environment, Climate Change, Disaster Risk Reduction and Poverty (GECDDP) Concerns in the 11th FYP of the Local Governments*.

¹⁶ Ministry of Labour and Human Resources. 2012. *Labour Force Survey Report 2012*. Table 2.1.

waste disposal. At the same time, because of these responsibilities, women are potentially valuable partners in community management of water resources and household wastes.

► ***Poverty is lower in urban than rural areas, but is an emerging issue***

Urban poverty levels are much lower than in rural areas. According to the poverty headcount in *Poverty Analysis Report 2012*, 1.8% of urban persons are poor, compared with 16.7% of the rural population, and only 3 in 1,000 urban dwellers were among the extreme poor (i.e., belonging to households that spend less than the food poverty line).²⁴

However, some observers have questioned this assessment for urban areas on the basis that it does not sufficiently reflect the higher cost of living in urban areas, and particularly the cost of housing, which has become both scarce and costly with the growth of urban populations.²⁵ Poverty and poor living conditions are evident in the shanty housing in sites in and near Thimphu and other cities.

While poverty is a burden for both men and women, the discussion in previous sections suggest the need to take account of gender differences in monitoring of the risk of poverty, how poverty is experienced, and the effectiveness of poverty reduction measures. Factors that could result in a widening gender gap among the disadvantaged include the higher risk of unemployment among women, the small numbers of women who have found jobs in the public sector where pay and conditions are better, the shortage of child care, and deficiencies in basic services.

► ***Domestic violence and tolerance of it are also urban issues***

A disturbing finding of a 2010 national survey is the extent to which domestic violence is condoned by women, including younger women, educated women, and women in all regions. Among urban women aged 15–49, 61% believe that a man is justified in beating his wife or partner for any of these reasons: neglect of children, going out without telling him, arguing with him, refusing sex, and

burning food.²⁶ An earlier study had found that a large proportion of urban women respondents viewed domestic violence as a private matter.²⁷

This level of tolerance of domestic violence suggests limited exposure to contrary views from women or from men, educational institutions, or political leaders. It also suggests a lack of awareness of women's rights as citizens to personal security and dignity.

► ***Few women participate in local government decision making***

The first set of local government elections under the 2008 Constitution and the revised framework for local government was held in 2011. Voter turnout for these elections was much lower than for the 2008 national elections, but women reportedly constituted more than half the voters. However, relatively few ran as candidates. When the results were counted, there were 61 women and 623 men among those elected to the critical but lowest level, the *Gewog Tshogpa*, and even fewer—1 woman and 201 men—were elected to the more influential post of *Gup*.²⁸

Barriers women face to standing and succeeding as candidates for elected office were explored in a survey of voters after the elections. The five major factors identified were lack of education, lack of functional literacy skills, limited involvement and skills in household and community decision making, low self-esteem, and heavy workloads.²⁹

Education and literacy are relevant as there is a functional literacy requirement (and test) to stand as a candidate; in addition, having these skills could also influence factors such as self-esteem and participation in community decision making. Literacy rates are generally low among women over 25, which is the minimum age specified by law to become a candidate for local government office—47% of women age 25–29 are literate, compared with 73% of men of the same age, and both

²⁴ National Statistics Bureau. 2013. *Poverty Analysis Report 2012*. pp. 9–10.

²⁵ N. Gyeltshen. 2010. Are We Underestimating the Urban Poor? *Kuensel Online*.

²⁶ BMIS 2010 (footnote 18), p. 176. Men's views on this question were not reported.

²⁷ RENEW. 2007. *Violence Against Women*. Thimphu. p. 34.

²⁸ National Commission for Women and Children and UN Women. 2012. *Women's Political Participation in 2011 Local Government Elections*. pp. 12–14.

²⁹ Women's Political (footnote 28), exec. sum, para. 2.

Box 7. Locally elected women describe the challenges and issues faced

At a 2012 workshop, locally elected women identified challenges and issues that hinder them from joining or remaining in the political sphere:

- Burden of household responsibilities in addition to *Genog* works makes some regret being elected
- Balancing family life and professional work. Very stressful, juggling household work and a career as elected leaders especially at local government level
- Frequent quarrels at home due to wife being outside a lot with possibility of more separations and divorces
- Long-distance travel to remote areas, given family responsibilities and young children often breast-feeding or sick child
- Unable to cope with hectic documentation and paperwork due to time and literacy level constraints
- Need to attend office at all times (some *Gups* demand it of *Tshogpas*) and women *Tshogpas* are struggling to cope with it as time is a constraint given other responsibilities
- When meetings or conflicts occur at odd places (far from home) and times (say a late-night call to attend to a domestic violence case), dealing with conflict at home with a jealous husband or sick child
- Conflict resolution as a whole due to lack of legal knowledge and skills
- Women feel more conscious, obliged, and anxious over fulfillment of development needs of their *Chiwog*, *Genog* compared with male colleagues
- Patriarchal values that undervalue women's capacity and ability to lead
- Women are pressured much more to fulfill their promises by villagers in comparison with their male counterparts (women must prove they are worthy, whereas it is taken for granted that men can lead and deliver)
- Pregnancy is an obstacle as it slackens women's commitment and pace of work
- Pregnancy is also used by men as an argument not to vote for women
- Getting peoples' attention in village meetings as women are respected less and not taken seriously by women and men alike.

Source: National Commission for Women and Children and Department of Local Government. 2012. *First National Consultation Workshop of Elected Women in Bhutan: Workshop Report*. March 16-17, Paro. Cosponsored by the Danish Institute for Parties and Democracy and UN Women.

literacy rates and male–female disparities in them increase with age.³⁰

Women's participation in local government may also be influenced by beliefs and expectations about women's roles in society. The same survey found that leadership and politics tended to be seen as masculine activities, and this belief was particularly strong among men but was also shared by women.³¹ Such views can inhibit women from

standing for office and can have an effect on the support women candidates receive; they may also affect working relations between women elected and their male colleagues.

Women elected to office met at a 2012 workshop at which they identified the challenges and issues facing them. These included a few stemming from lack of skills and experience, but many more related to the heavy demands on time and the need to reconcile these with household and family demands. Another issue was resistance to their political role from families and communities (Box 7).

Finally, some electoral contests attracted neither women nor men candidates, and many posts were unfilled after the 2011 elections. Newspaper reports suggest that success in local elections brings heavy responsibilities with limited remuneration.³² Given women's already heavy workloads, these conditions may be another disincentive to running for public office.

Government Commitments to Support Women or Gender Equality in the Sector

The national government has promoted attention to women's participation in local government and to gender in local planning.

The Department of Local Government has identified the need for more advocacy to increase acceptance of women as political players and awareness of their potential as leaders. One promising idea to boost representation is to identify potential candidates among women who have several years of education but dropped out before class X and stayed or returned to their communities, and to provide them with the encouragement and confidence-building support that could encourage them to participate in the next round of local elections.³³

Dzongkhags and *Genogs* prepare five-year plans on the same cycle as the national plans and

³⁰ BLSS 2012 (footnote 15), p. 27, Table 3.1.

³¹ Women's Political (footnote 28), exec. sum., para. 5.

³² News reports in *Kuensel* and *Bhutan Observer*, 2013.

³³ Discussion with Department of Local Government, January 2013.

use the same planning framework, which is based on the four pillars derived from the concept of gross national happiness. These local government bodies are also directed to “mainstream and integrate” gender equality (among other cross-cutting issues).³⁴ The *Local Development Planning Manual* includes prompts to users at various steps of the planning process to identify women’s views or to identify whether women will benefit. A number of the proposed tools to be used in participatory planning sessions reiterate these points. For example, the tool for the “gross national happiness check” includes questions about whether women gain equal benefits from such services and the extent to which an activity promotes gender equality.³⁵

Looking Forward: Issues and Opportunities to Consider

This section highlights a number of issues and opportunities that merit consideration as part of urban development approaches.

► *Data and information needs for informed urban and spatial planning*

Subjects on which more data and analysis with a gender perspective could contribute to more informed decision making for urban and spatial planning include the following:

- *Rural–urban migration.* What proportion of migration do women account for? Do they have similar age and education profiles? Do they migrate independently or with relatives? Does the rural–urban shift have similar results with respect to jobs and standard of living?
- *Household characteristics.* How many earning members do households have? How do incomes of households headed by women compare with those headed by men? Do the two types of household have similar numbers of income earners? Do they have similar numbers of dependent children or elderly persons?
- *Access to housing in urban areas.* Do single women and households headed by women

face any particular barriers in access to housing? Do these relate to incomes and affordability, or a lack of housing suited to their needs?

- *Constraints to employment by women.* Why are unemployment rates higher for women? Is it related to their skills or aspirations? Are there biases in the labor market that need to be addressed? What role does child care availability play?
- *Urban home-based businesses.* What proportion of urban cottage and small enterprises are home-based? Are there steps related to zoning or services that would help such enterprises and increase productivity and incomes?

► *Women as actors and agents, not just a “vulnerable group”*

References to women in urbanization strategies and local government plans tend to be made in the context of a list of vulnerable groups. This perspective may result in some protection in areas of need, but it undervalues the contributions made by women to supporting themselves, their families, and their communities (despite an additional set of handicaps based on gender discrimination).

A reorientation of perspective to see women as economic actors and agents of development would better reflect the reality of women’s lives and promote the formulation of strategies that make better use of the skills and perspectives of women.

► *Gender perspectives on spatial and infrastructure planning*

While urban settlements remain small, rapid growth rates and the anticipation of continued growth has lent some urgency to developing spatial plans and responding to basic water supply, sanitation, and waste management needs. Such services are important to all urban residents, but they are particularly important to women because they bear a disproportionate share of the burden of deficient services.

Choices made at this critical stage of urban planning will have impacts long into the future, and it therefore seems justified to take specific measures to ensure that women’s views and priorities are incorporated into the

³⁴ See GECPD Framework (footnote 23), pp. 1–2.

³⁵ Gross National Happiness Commission. 2009. *Local Development Planning Manual: Standards for annual planning at the Dzongkhag and Gewog level*. Tools 2 and 6.

process despite their low representation on elected local government bodies.

► ***Women's participation in employment opportunities in urban and infrastructure development***

In addition to the low numbers of elected women in local government, women are not well represented in the national civil service, which provides technical support to local governments and delivers many national programs at the local level.³⁶

The increasing numbers of young women graduates provides opportunities to increase their representation. Women are still in a minority among tertiary students but they account for a substantial proportion of graduates in fields relevant to planning and managing urban development, including graduates with engineering and science as well as general degrees. For example, during 2009–2011, 43% of Sherubtse College graduates were women, as were 30% of graduates of the College of Science and Technology.³⁷ Increasing the number of women working at the national and local level on urban and spatial planning may require greater efforts

to attract them to such work and to ensure a supportive work environment.

► ***Making cities and towns safe places for women***

A notable provision of the Local Government Act, 2009 is that local governments are assigned responsibility for protecting women (and children and the physically challenged) and reducing violence against them.³⁸ In addition to awareness strategies and public leadership on domestic violence, there are also steps that can be taken to enhance women's personal security in public areas and when using public services; for example, ensuring that

- streetlights are adequate and functioning;
- bus shelters and waiting areas are well lighted and appropriately located;
- evening bus services are frequent and requests to stop to disembark are possible;
- there are public toilets for women that are located so they can be used without fear of sexual harassment; and
- public telephones or other means of communication are available in case of emergency.

³⁶ Royal Civil Service Commission. *Civil Service Statistics December 2012*.

³⁷ Ministry of Labour and Human Resources. *Labour Market Information Bulletin*. For 2009: Tables 5.2–5.5; 2010: Tables 3.4, 3.9–3.11; 2011: Table 5.8. Data for the 3 years were combined to provide a more reliable picture.

³⁸ Local Government Act, 2009, para. 48(j).

APPENDIX A. Tip Sheet on Integrating Gender Perspectives in Analysis and Planning in the Sector		
STEP 1: What are the positive outcomes for women or gender equality that could be achieved through gender mainstreaming?	STEP 2: What are some of the questions we should ask to better understand gender equality issues and women's needs in these areas?	STEP 3: What steps or strategies could be considered or adapted to move forward in these areas?
<p>Policies and strategies for regional development and urban areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Better recognition of specific challenges facing women in urban areas → Better knowledge of the gender dimensions of rural–urban migration → Improved data and skills for gender-responsive policy and program development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do data sources and systems generate the sex-disaggregated data required for analysis of needs, options, and quality of life? • Are there accurate and up-to-date data on rural–urban migration patterns that provide breakdowns by sex? • What is known about access to housing by single women and households headed by women, and how it compares with similarly placed men? • What is known about how and why women's economic activities and employment differ from those of men? • Do data sources allow for comparisons between households headed by women and those headed by men in urban areas? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allocate resources and expertise to ensuring that data sources and systems generate sex-disaggregated data on rural–urban migration, and on gender differences in key areas for planning and analysis (including, e.g., employment and economic opportunities and constraints, incomes, housing, child care; and differences in characteristics between households headed by women and those headed by men). • Develop links between government agencies and research and advocacy organizations concerned with women's issues (to provide research inputs, feedback on options under discussion, etc.).
<p>Governance capacity and practices of locally elected officials:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → More informed and positive attitudes by elected officials (women and men) about the needs of women in the areas they serve → More informed and skilled locally elected women 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do men elected to local government see as their responsibilities to women in the community, both as users of services and as citizens? • Are elected women participating in discussions on all decisions addressed by their <i>Tshogpa</i> (not only welfare and children's issues)? If not, why not? • Do poor women have ready access to local government elected leaders and members? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partner with women's advocacy organizations to provide opportunities for locally elected officials (both women and men) to discuss issues facing women in the community and options to address them. • Facilitate links and networking among women elected at the local level to allow for exchanges of experience and mutual learning.
<p>Planning and management capacity at the local level (particularly in relation to urban issues and management):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Increased responsiveness of management and staff to gender differences in needs and priorities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do local governments have access to appropriate sex-disaggregated data to assess gender-specific needs? • Have local planners and decision makers been sufficiently exposed to gender equality issues and how they can be pursued at the local level? • Have issues and priorities relating to gender equality been identified at the local level to guide planning? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allocate resources and expertise to improving the data available to local officials to enable them to compare needs of women and men and to monitor the impact of program decisions. • Strengthen links on gender equality among cities and towns to allow for sharing of experience. • Strengthen links between local and national officials on gender equality issues to increase awareness of the national context and possible options.
<p>Development of urban spatial and structural plans:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Increased opportunities for women to voice their interests and participate in decision making → Plans that are more responsive to women's priorities for services and women's needs for equitable economic opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In consultation processes, are women equitably represented? Do they have the opportunity or the confidence to voice their views? Do men listen? • Do the criteria for spatial plans and infrastructure designs include attention to implications for women's safety (e.g., the role of street lighting, pedestrian walkways, and protected-access public toilets)? • Do zoning policies allow for mixed land uses in ways that facilitate the mixed family and economic responsibilities of parents? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that consultation plans identify and respond to constraints to women's participation (e.g., times and locations that allow women to attend, focus groups with women if there are difficulties in participating in mixed groups, and supporting men to work constructively with women).

APPENDIX A. Tip Sheet on Integrating Gender Perspectives in Analysis and Planning in the Sector

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<p>Planning for urban water supply, sanitation, and waste disposal systems:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Better reflection of women's priorities in selection of infrastructure investments → More women-friendly design and placement of infrastructure, increased personal safety → Decreased workloads for women to meet household water and sanitation needs → Increased engagement of women in community management of these services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do women identify as their water and sanitation needs and priorities? How do they compare with the needs men identify? • What are women's views on issues such as number and location of facilities (pumps and toilets), sharing versus individual facilities, and design of public toilets? • Are women's voices in community discussions and decision making about water supply and sanitation proportionate to their extensive household responsibilities for water and hygiene? • Has the approach to service delivery in poor and slum areas considered how to overcome obstacles that poor households could face, in particular, lack of formal title or tenure to their dwelling? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that consultations identify issues for women and men separately, to better identify and respond to needs. • Give priority to women's views on priorities for the type, design, and location of household or community water supply, toilet facilities, and waste collection. • Explore options to ensure that procedures for connection, billing, and payment do not exclude poor women and poor households.
<p>Planning at the local level to strengthen employment and livelihood options in urban areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Improved opportunities, productivity, and incomes for women 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the main sources of work and income for women in the area? What are the main sources of regular wage employment? To what extent do women depend for income on casual labor, domestic service, or home-based production? • What specific constraints do women face in finding and keeping adequate jobs and incomes? Are these related to the context (e.g., transport options, limited employment on offer, etc.)? What are the constraints related to capacities (e.g., literacy, vocational or management skills, etc.) or child care availability or costs? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Devise local economic development strategies that specifically aim to ensure equitable opportunities for women. • Facilitate access to vocational and entrepreneurial training offered by government and nongovernment agencies.
<p>Temporary employment related to implementation of infrastructure plans and urban construction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Equitable access to temporary project jobs → Better recognition of women's rights to equal pay and appropriate working conditions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are workers and contractors aware of core labor standards and workers' rights, including women's rights to nondiscrimination and equal pay? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set targets for women's participation at different skill levels that are meaningful and achievable (given labor supply, local conditions, etc.). • Brief contractors on their responsibilities for equitable pay and working conditions.
<p>Resettlement of those displaced by new infrastructure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Restoration of women's livelihoods and income 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are there barriers to women's participation in consultation processes (related to, for example, transport availability or costs, household duties, and local social mores)? • How do displacement and resettlement affect women's livelihoods? Are there adequate and affordable transport services to reach places of employment? Can previous livelihoods in self-employment or trade be reestablished and made viable? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a consultation strategy that addresses the barriers identified to ensure that women are reached (households headed by women, widows, married women, and single women). • Develop and fund a plan to facilitate reestablishment of livelihoods (responding to findings of needs analysis).

APPENDIX B. Useful Resources for Gender Analysis in the Sector

Bhutan-based background information and gender-specific resources

Useful sector overview and background documents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ministry of Works and Human Settlement. 2008. <i>Bhutan National Urbanization Strategy</i>. www.mowhs.gov.bt/wp-content/uploads/2010/11/Bhutan_National_Urbanization_Strategy_2008.pdf Gross National Happiness Commission. 2009. <i>Tenth Five-Year Plan, 2008–2013</i>. Vol. 1. pp. 34–36, 38–39, 145–146. www.gnhc.gov.bt/five-year-plan/ Gross National Happiness Commission. 2012. <i>Guidelines for the Eleventh Five-Year Plan (2013–2018)</i>. p. 17. www.gnhc.gov.bt/guidelines Gross National Happiness Commission. 2009. <i>Local Development Planning Manual: standards for annual planning at the Dzongkhag and Gewog level</i>. www.gnhc.gov.bt/wp-content/uploads/2011/publications/lga/LD%20Planning%20Manual%20Dec%202010.pdf Gross National Happiness Commission. 2013. <i>Framework to Mainstream Gender, Environment, Climate Change, Disaster Risk Reduction and Poverty (GECDP) concerns in the 11th FYP of the Local Governments</i>. www.gnhc.gov.bt/wp-content/uploads/2011/05/ECPM-Framework-LG.pdf
Relevant policy statements and legislation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Local Government Act of Bhutan, 2009</i>. www.nab.gov.bt/ActParliament/8LGEng.pdf (Note: this replaces the <i>Local Government Act, 2007</i> and the <i>Thromde Act, 2007</i>.) <i>Thromde Rules, 2011</i>. www.mowhs.gov.bt/?page_id=235 <i>Thromde Finance Policy, Bhutan, 2012</i>. www.mowhs.gov.bt/?page_id=235
Data sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Statistics Bureau. <i>Bhutan Multiple Indicator Survey, 2010</i>. Focused on the situation of women and children and done with the support of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the United Nations Population Fund. http://catalog.ihns.org/index.php/catalog/1373/related_materials National Statistics Bureau. <i>Bhutan Living Standards Survey</i>. Done in 2003, 2007 and 2012. 2003: http://catalog.ihns.org/index.php/catalog/23/related_materials 2007: http://catalog.ihns.org/index.php/catalog/24/related_materials 2012: http://catalog.ihns.org/index.php/catalog/3250/related_materials <i>Poverty Analysis Report</i>. Prepared on the basis of data from the Bhutan Living Standards Survey; issued in 2007 and 2012 and available from the same webpages as listed in the bullet above. Ministry of Labour and Human Resources. <i>Annual Labour Force Survey</i>. www.molhr.gov.bt/molhrsite/?page_id=577
Research and analysis on gender equality and urban sector development in Bhutan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Commission for Women and Children and UN Women. 2012. <i>Women's Political Participation in 2011 Local Government Elections</i>. Available from the commission. National Commission for Women and Children and Department of Local Government. 2012. <i>First National Consultation Workshop of Elected Women in Bhutan: Workshop Report</i>. 16–17 March 2012. Cosponsored by the Danish Institute for Parties and Democracy and UN Women. http://dipd.dk/wp-content/uploads/Bhutan-Women-WorkshopReport-Final1.pdf
Other resources	
Research and articles on gender equality and urban development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Women in Cities International. <i>Tackling Gender Exclusion: Experiences from the Gender Inclusive Cities Programme</i>. Lessons from experiences across four cities. http://jagori.org/gender-inclusive-cities-final-report S. Tawa Lama-Rewal. 2011. <i>Women's Right to the City: from Safety to Citizenship</i>. <i>Urban Policies and the Right to the City in India</i>. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0021/002146/214602e.pdf D. Peters. 2011. <i>Gender and Sustainable Urban Mobility</i>. Prepared for the <i>Global Report on Human Settlements 2013</i>. www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2012/cc/bgrd/CC20_1_app3_24.pdf
Guides and case studies on gender and urban development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> World Bank. 2010. <i>Making Urban Development Work for Women and Men: Tools for Task Teams</i>. go.worldbank.org/UW1GDCX260 WomenWatch. 2009. <i>Gender Equality and Sustainable Urbanisation: Fact Sheet</i>. Brief overview, with links to further resources for each. www.un.org/womenwatch/feature/urban

Toward Gender-Equitable Opportunities and Outcomes:

Work and Unemployment

Summary	
Sector context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employment growth has not kept pace with growth in demand for employment from educated youth entering the labor market. • There is a mismatch between labor market needs and the skills, knowledge, and aspirations of youth. • Lack of skilled workers is a constraint in key sectors; foreign workers are used to bridge skill gaps. • The Tenth Five-Year Plan focused on private sector development, and on expanded and improved technical and vocational training.
Gender equality issues relevant to sector activities and outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women and men have similar labor force participation rates but do different types of work. • Unemployment is higher for women than men (youth and adult). • Women are more prone to underemployment and low earnings. • Fewer women than men have benefited from training. • Women account for a substantial proportion of educated jobseekers entering the labor market. • Women's representation in the civil service has yet to catch up with the increase in educated women entering the labor market. • Availability of child care has yet to be investigated and pursued as a public policy issue related to women's economic opportunities. • Young migrant women providing child care is a two-sided employment equality issue for women.
Government commitments to support women or gender equality in the sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discrimination in the labor force is prohibited by Bhutan's Constitution and by labor legislation. • The Eleventh Five-Year Plan sets targets for reduced female youth unemployment. • The plan also calls for gender mainstreaming.
Looking forward: issues and opportunities to consider	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender mainstreaming in policies and strategies • Training and placement services for skills in demand • Employer attitudes and management practices • Protection provided by minimum standards legislation • Child care as an issue of equal employment opportunities • Leadership role of the public sector
Appendixes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tip Sheet on Integrating Gender Perspectives in the Sector • Useful Resources for Gender Analysis in the Sector

Sector Context

Some of the challenges facing Bhutan are evident in the characteristics of employment and the labor market that are highlighted below and in Box 1:

- a large proportion of the labor force remains dependent on agriculture: 46% of employed men and 73% of employed women;
- government service is a major source of nonagricultural employment, absorbing 38% of men and 25% of women in nonagricultural employment;
- regular wage employment (compared with casual employment, unpaid family work, or self-employment) is enjoyed by less than one-quarter of all workers: 36% of employed men and only 12% of employed women are in this category;
- youth aged 15–24 account for 14% of the labor force and 50% of the unemployed, and there are more girls than boys among unemployed youth; and
- foreign workers are a significant element in the labor force.

The labor market is one of many aspects of society that is being transformed by the pace of development and change in Bhutan. With the expansion of the education system, youth entering the labor market generally have a mid-secondary-level education and the labor force is more educated than ever before. Until relatively recently, the government sector was able to absorb most educated youth. Although this is no longer the case, many youth continue to aspire to government jobs. Youth tend to have negative views of both private sector and blue-collar work. Public sector employment not only has higher status but it provides better working conditions and benefits.¹

At the same time, a concern in the small but growing private sector is that, although youth coming into the labor market are literate and numerate, they lack the job skills, business knowledge, and work experience required

Box 1. Most of the labor force is in agriculture, a large proportion of the rest work for government, and youth unemployment is high

Labor force characteristics, 2012	Male	Female	Total
Proportion of the employed working in agriculture	46.2%	73.2%	60.0%
Number working in agriculture	74,612	123,054	197,666
Proportion of those not in agriculture who are working for government	38.4%	25.0%	33.8%
Number working for government	33,289	11,273	44,562
Proportion of all the employed who are regularly paid employees (i.e., not casual, unpaid family, or own-account)	36.3%	11.9%	23.9%
Number of the employed in the regularly paid category	58,555	20,016	78,571
Youth (age 15–24) as proportion of the labor force	11.6%	16.8%	14.3%
Number of youth in the labor force	19,078	28,855	47,933
Youth (age 15–24) as proportion of the unemployed	44.6%	55.1%	50.3%
Number of youth who are unemployed	1,393	2,083	3,475
Total labor force	164,484	171,907	336,391
Total employed	161,362	168,125	329,487
Number of foreign workers (2011)	51,551	241	51,792

Source: Ministry of Labour and Human Resources. *Labour Force Survey Report, 2012*. Calculated from tables 2.0, 3.0, 6.1, 6.2. Government employees do not include the army or public corporations. Data on foreign workers from Ministry of Labour and Human Resources. *Labour Market Information Bulletin 2011*. Table 6.2. Of the foreign workers, 99% are from India.

on the job.² A 2010 survey of private sector enterprises with five or more employees found that the generally low level of workforce skills was considered a major obstacle by 10% of firms.³ There are also shortages in the trade and construction skills that are in demand for hydroelectric, road, and other infrastructure work that is critical to building the country and is driving much of its growth.⁴

Rural areas are also experiencing a shortage of labor for agricultural work, given rapid urbanization fueled by participation in education, the accompanying change in aspirations, and the opportunities available in urban areas. This demand for labor has been cited as a major factor responsible for the increase in the rural female labor force:

² Employment Challenges (footnote 1), p. 17.

³ World Bank. 2010. *Bhutan Investment Climate Assessment Report: Vitalizing the Private Sector, Creating Jobs*. Washington, DC. Vol. II. pp. 23–25.

⁴ Employment Challenges (footnote 1), p. 35.

¹ United Nations Development Programme. 2012. *Employment Challenges in Bhutan: Discussion Paper*. Thimphu. pp. 17, 35.

as more men than women migrate to urban areas, women are increasing their farm and agricultural work to make up the shortfall.⁵

The two major employment challenges highlighted in the Eleventh Five-Year Plan, 2013–2018 are to improve employment quality (given low incomes and limited social security) and to create jobs (to provide for an estimated 120,000 jobseekers). The main strategy will be to launch a new flagship program, Rapid Investments in Selected Enterprises, which will seek to accelerate development of four or five prioritized nonhydro sectors, tentatively identified as agroprocessing, tourism, construction, manufacturing, and cottage and small industries (including cultural industries).⁶

The 11th plan's strategies for human resource development (HRD) are intended to develop skills to meet the objectives of the Economic Development Policy 2010.⁷ The policy identifies priority growth areas and aims to provide an enabling environment for investment. It recognizes the problems posed by the shortage of professionals, low labor productivity, and a lack of management skills. The approach to be taken was elaborated in the HRD Master Plan for the Economic Sectors, which was prepared to accompany the 11th plan. It sets out objectives related to developing the country's skill base, the private sector culture related to HRD, and the national education and training system.⁸

The current public technical and vocational education and training (TVET) system consists of two institutes teaching traditional arts and crafts and six technical training institutes that train construction workers, automobile technicians, electricians, computer repair technicians, and heavy vehicle drivers. Despite the enormous requirement for technicians evident in the number of

skilled foreign workers currently employed (more than 50,000 in construction alone), and the relatively small number of training spaces offered, some of the courses are undersubscribed, reflecting views of youth about the status and working conditions associated with these skilled blue-collar jobs. The approach proposed in this context is to gradually double the number of training spaces to 1,562 by the end of the 11th plan (plus a further 320 spaces in the traditional arts and crafts institutes), to improve training quality, and to expand efforts to encourage youth to take up trades.⁹

There is also an apprenticeship program that is largely in the hospitality and service industry, where it has a rather unstructured nature. This program will also be improved and expanded under the 11th plan.¹⁰

The lead agency for policy and services related to employment and the labor market is the Ministry of Labour and Human Resources, which has four departments:

- the Department of Employment, which provides employment services such as jobseeker registration and referral, labor market analysis, and entrepreneurship training and support;
- the Department of Labour, which implements policies for labor protection, labor relations, and foreign workers;
- the Department of Human Resources, which is responsible for technical and vocational training; and
- the Occupational Standards Department, which regulates the quality and relevance of technical and vocational training.

Also important is the Royal Civil Service Commission, which handles public sector employment (excluding public corporations).

Other chapters of this report discuss related issues: see chapters on education, private sector development, agriculture and rural livelihoods, and urban development.

⁵ Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and World Bank. 2012. *Bhutan Agriculture Sector Review: Vol. 1. Issues, Institutions, Policies*. Rome. pp 37–38.

⁶ Gross National Happiness Commission. 2013. *Eleventh Five-Year Plan, 2013–2018*. pp. 165–169.

⁷ 11th plan (footnote 6), pp. 161–162

⁸ Ministry of Labour and Human Resources. 2013. *11th FYP HRD Master Plan for the Economic Sectors (2013–2018)*.

⁹ HRD Master Plan (footnote 8), pp. 44–46.

¹⁰ HRD Master Plan (footnote 8), p. 47.

Gender Equality Issues Relevant to Sector Activities and Outcomes

- *While women and men have similar labor force participation rates, they do different types of work*

Box 2 shows the similarity between the labor force participation rates of women and men through different life stages. However, other employment data show that there are major differences by sex in sectors, types of work, and working conditions.

As noted above, agriculture continues to be the mainstay of a large proportion of the population, particularly women—73% of all employed women work in agriculture compared to 46% of all employed men. The illustration in Box 3 makes clear the extent to which women predominate in agricultural work and men in nonagricultural employment. While the work in agriculture is critical for family livelihoods and the nation's food supply, it is also a sector in which productivity and earnings are low. It is because of such characteristics that one of the gender equality indicators for the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) is women's share of wage employment in the nonagriculture sector. This indicator tracks the extent to which women have been able to move into employment with higher returns on their labor.

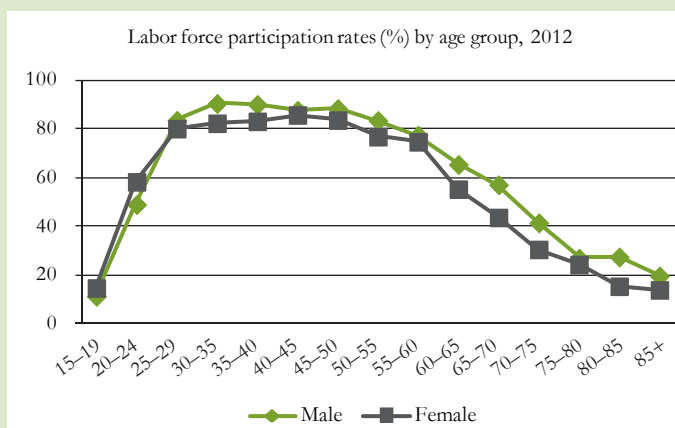
Considering only nonagricultural work, as is done in Box 4, it is clear that women are in a minority in all types of enterprises and particularly in government and corporate employment, which offer the best conditions of work.

- *Unemployment is higher for women than men—youth and adult*

Data on unemployment rates also suggest differences in opportunities for women and men, both youth (age 15–24) and adults (age 25 and over).

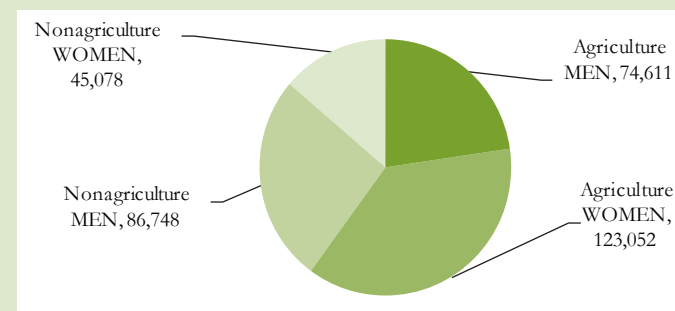
Box 5 shows that unemployment rates are highest for the 15–19 and 20–24 age groups. Unemployment rates drop somewhat among those aged 25–29 and are substantially lower for all age groups above 30. Unemployment rates are considerably higher in urban than rural areas, and are higher for urban women than urban men in all age groups.

Box 2. Labor force participation rates are similar for women and men



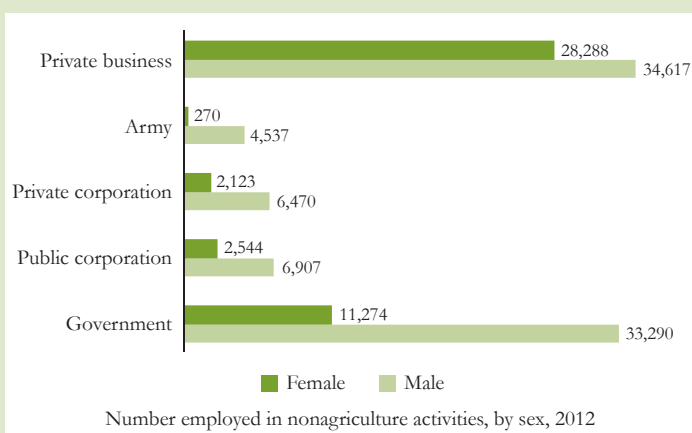
Source: Ministry of Labour and Human Resources. *Labour Force Survey Report, 2012*. Table 2.0.

Box 3. Most of the labor force is still in agriculture, but the agriculture–nonagriculture split differs by sex



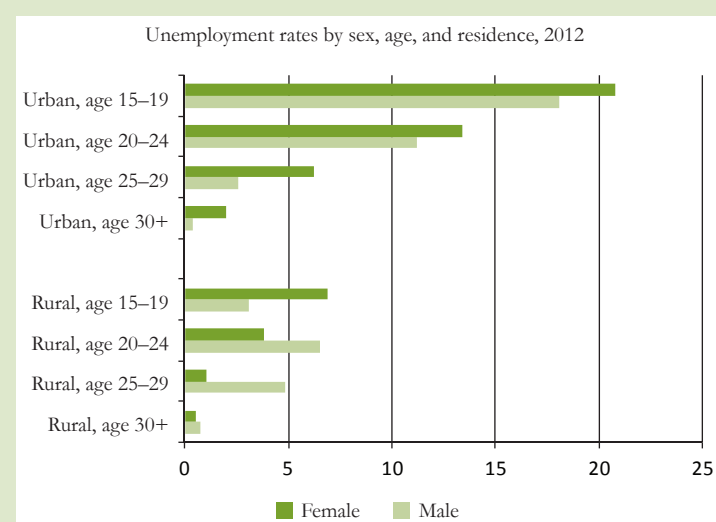
Source: Ministry of Labour and Human Resources. *Labour Force Survey Report, 2012*. Table 3.3.

Box 4. Employment by types of enterprise also differs by sex



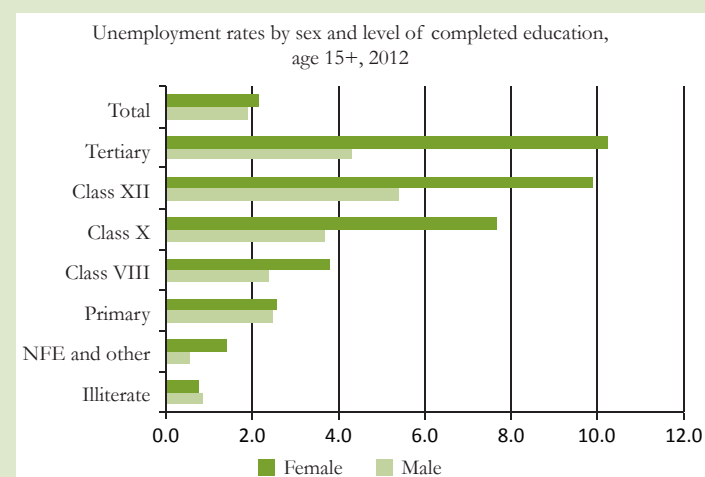
Source: Ministry of Labour and Human Resources. *Labour Force Survey Report, 2012*. Table 3.3.

Box 5. Unemployment rates tend to be higher in urban than rural areas, among younger than older age groups, and among women compared with men



Source: Ministry of Labour and Human Resources. *Labour Force Survey Report, 2012*. Tables 2.1, 2.2.

Box 6. Unemployment rates are higher for women at all levels of education



NFE = nonformal education.

Source: Ministry of Labour and Human Resources. *Labour Force Survey Report, 2012*. Calculated from tables 4.1, 4.2, and 17.1.

Box 7. Unemployment rates are higher among urban women (%)

	Urban		Rural		Total	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
2012	2.0	5.6	1.9	1.2	1.9	2.2
2011	2.7	10.0	1.5	2.7	1.8	4.5
2010	2.9	7.8	2.6	2.5	2.7	4.0
2009	4.2	11.6	2.1	3.8	2.6	5.3

Source: Ministry of Labour and Human Resources. Labour Force Surveys 2009–2012.

Unemployment rates are also higher for women than men at every level of education (Box 6). Unemployment rates are highest among women with some tertiary education (some undergraduate study, a bachelor's or master's degree, or some form of certificate or diploma). It is also at the tertiary level that the gap between male and female unemployment rates is greatest.

Unemployment rates have been higher among women than men for more than a decade.¹¹ The discrepancy arises in urban areas, where the female unemployment rate has been more than double the male rate since 2009 (Box 7).¹²

These gaps between women and men in unemployment rates, particularly among youth and in urban areas, suggests the need for more attention to ensuring equal opportunities in the labor market. The existence of these gaps at all levels of education is a particularly worrying indicator of discrimination in the labor market.

The 10th Five-Year Plan also raised concerns about underemployment, particularly among women. (Underemployment is also often referred to as hidden unemployment.) While noting the lack of data for a thorough assessment, the plan referred to several indicators of underemployment: the high number of unpaid workers in family enterprises, the large number of persons in jobs with low pay, the increased number of workers working fewer hours, and the coexistence of low rural unemployment with high rural poverty.¹³

Women predominate in the types of work in question. In particular, women predominate among unpaid family workers and workers with low earnings. This is evident in the data on monthly earnings from the 2012 Labour Force Survey, which showed that only 40% of working women reported earnings of more than Nu1,000 per month in (approximately \$18) compared to 72% of men. Among skilled agricultural and fisheries workers (the

¹¹ Ministry of Labour and Human Resources. *Labour Market Information Bulletin 2011* (LMIB 2011). Table 3.1 for data 1998–2011.

¹² Comparable data for previous years not as readily available.

¹³ Gross National Happiness Commission. *Tenth Five-Year Plan, 2008–2013*. Vol. 1. p. 77–78.

largest occupational category, accounting for 75% of employed women), only 22% of women reported monthly earnings of more than Nu1,000.¹⁴

► ***Fewer women than men have benefited from some form of training***

There is only suggestive information available on enrollment and completion of training, but it generally points to the conclusion that women have had fewer opportunities. The 2012 Labour Force Survey found that 57,551 respondents had had some form of formal, informal, or nonformal training; but that only 24.5% of those with training were women.¹⁵

In the public TVET system in 2011, women accounted for 39% of the 615 trainees completing courses, and they were almost all in what is often referred to as “nontraditional” fields for women—electrical and electronic skills, construction skills, and heavy vehicle driving.¹⁶

While TVET generally targets youth, the Village Skills Development Program targets rural villagers and provides training in functional skills for income generation, including construction skills. As of 2012, some 1,728 villagers in 175 *Gewogs* (counties) had participated in the training, and the program is expected to extend to another 1,000 participants.¹⁷ Data on participation by sex are only available for 2002–2009, and show that women accounted for only 26% of participants.¹⁸

► ***But women account for a substantial proportion of educated jobseekers and of new labor market entrants with engineering, science, and business degrees***

The education profile of women seeking employment is changing as women constitute an increasing proportion of students at all levels. During 2009–2011, women made

Box 8. Women now constitute a substantial proportion of educated jobseekers

Females registered as jobseekers with the Ministry of Labour and Human Resources, 2009–2011, by educational attainment

Educational attainment	Number of females registered jobseekers	Females as a % of all registered jobseekers
Master	21	35.0%
Technical graduate	296	31.2%
General graduate	1,176	45.2%
Diploma	109	37.8%
Class XII	3,403	51.7%
Certificate	725	51.6%
Class X	2,035	60.1%
Total of all the above	7,765	50.9%

Note: Data for the 3 years were combined to provide a more reliable picture.

Source: Ministry of Labour and Human Resources. *Labour Market Information Bulletin*. For each of the years 2009–2011. Table 5.4.

up half of the registered jobseekers with education to at least class X level, and 45% of those with a general degree (Box 8).

Considering specific areas of study, women are more likely to have arts and business qualifications than science or engineering ones, but they also accounted for 30% of the bachelor's degrees in civil, electrical, and mechanical engineering awarded by the College of Science and Technology during 2009–2011 (Box 9).¹⁹

► ***Women's representation in the civil service has yet to catch up with the increased numbers of educated women entering the labor market***

In Bhutan, the Civil Service Commission is the largest single employer, with a total 24,275 employees in 2012, of which only 33% were women.²⁰ The current civil service profile reflects a pattern of hiring over several decades during which more men than women achieved an education and stood as candidates for the civil service. The number of female civil servants has shown a steady increase in recent years, rising from 2,180 in 1996 to 7,926 in 2012. Women accounted for 39% of civil servants recruited in 2012, more

¹⁴ Ministry of Labour and Human Resources. *Labour Force Survey Report 2012* (LFS 2012). Calculated from tables 13.1, 13.2, 16.1, 16.2.

¹⁵ LFS 2012 (footnote 14), Table 18.0. This seems to exclude college or tertiary studies, but no definitions are provided for any of the categories.

¹⁶ LMIB 2011 (footnote 11), p. 43.

¹⁷ Ministry of Labour and Human Resources. *Annual Report 2011–2012*, p. 13.

¹⁸ ADB. 2010. *Completion Report: Basic Skills Development Project in Bhutan*. Manila. Project 31317-013.

¹⁹ Data for students graduating outside Bhutan are not available for the same period, but for the one year that they are, the proportion of women graduating abroad is similar to that graduating in Bhutan: just over 40%. LMIB 2011 (footnote 11), tables 5.1, 5.2, 5.3.

²⁰ Data in this paragraph is from Royal Civil Service Commission. *Civil Service Statistics December 2012*. Tables 1, 23; graphs 4, 6.

Box 9. Women now constitute a substantial proportion of new tertiary graduates in engineering, science, and business fields

Females in the graduating class, selected institutes, 2009–2011

Institute	Number of females graduating	Females as % of all graduates
Jigme Namgyel Polytechnic (diplomas in civil, electrical, and mechanical engineering)	89	23.5%
College of Science and Technology (bachelor's degrees in civil and electrical engineering)	93	30.2%
Sherubtse College (bachelor's degree in arts, bachelor's degree in sciences)	373	42.8%
Gaeddug College of Business Studies (bachelor's degree in business administration)	163	39.5%
Royal Thimphu College (bachelor's degrees in commerce, arts, science)	152	57.1%
Total of all the above	870	38.9%

Note: Data for the 3 years were combined to provide a more reliable picture. Data for 2011 only for Royal Thimphu College

 Source: Ministry of Labour and Human Resources. *Labour Market Information Bulletin*. For 2009: Tables 5.2–5.5; 2010: Tables 3.4, 3.9–3.11; 2011: Table 5.8.

closely reflecting their representation among tertiary graduates.

The challenge will be to ensure that women keep pace in advancement with the men in their cohort so that they become part of the executive and decision-making levels where women are now very scarce.

► ***Availability of child care has yet to be investigated and pursued as a public policy issue related to women's economic opportunities***

Private child care centers were first formally recognized as separate entities in 2004, and by 2012 there were 29 private centers and another 5 in workplaces caring for about 1,050 children in total.²¹ These are largely in urban areas, where the establishment of private centers has been encouraged by the Ministry of Education since the Ninth Five-Year Plan. The approach continues under the National Policy on Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD). There are also community-based ECCD centers that have more support from the ministry for supplies and staff.²² These facilities take care

of another 1,500 children.²³ Almost all the community-based ECCD centers are in rural areas, with the possible exception of a few that may have been established in urban low-income or squatter areas.²⁴

The ECCD centers, private and otherwise, are intended for the care of children aged 3–5, after which children enter school. To bridge the rest of the working day, some primary schools keep children in the building with someone to look after them, but such arrangements have not been formalized. For children less than 3 years of age there does not seem to be organized or supervised system of child care or daycare.

The Bhutan Multiple Indicator Survey, 2010 found that 18% of urban children and 6% of rural children aged 3–5 were in some form of organized early childhood education program; children in well-off families were more likely to be enrolled than those from poorer families. At the other end of the spectrum of care, the survey also found that 8% of urban children under the age of 5 were either left alone or in the care of another child less than 10 years old in the week before the survey, while 17% of rural children experienced these types of inadequate care.²⁵

These data suggest a shortage of choices for working parents. It could be speculated from labor force data that this situation puts pressure on women, particularly in urban areas where family networks and assistance are less available. The 2012 Labour Force Survey shows that in urban areas women's labor force participation is slightly higher than that of men at age 20–24, but for each of the five-year age groups between 25 and 44, the rates are 20%–30% less than those of men.²⁶ Reasons for this discrepancy were not explored by the Labour Force Survey. However, the 2012 Bhutan Living Standards Survey asked about reasons for not working or not looking for a job, and found that 93% of urban women aged 25–34 and 99% of women aged 35–44 cited

Report for the ECCD Situational Study. While the ECCD policy remains in draft, it seems to be a working tool.

²³ Education Statistics 2012 (footnote 21), pp. 1–2, 20.

²⁴ Information from Ministry of Education, January 2013.

²⁵ National Statistics Bureau. *Bhutan Multiple Indicator Survey, 2010* (BMIS 2010), pp. 129–137.

²⁶ LFS 2012 (footnote 14), Table 2.1.

²¹ Ministry of Education. 2012. *Annual Education Statistics, 2012*. pp. 1–2, 20.

²² Royal Education Council. 2011. *The Status of Early Childhood Care and Development in Bhutan. An Internal*

“house or family duties.” For men in the same age categories, the comparative figures are 20% for those aged 25–34 and 23% for those aged 35–44.²⁷ While “house and family duties” could cover duties other than child care, child care could be expected to be a major factor in the childbearing years.

► ***Child care and domestic services provided by young migrants is a two-sided women’s employment issue***

One strategy for urban families has been to employ young women migrants from rural areas to undertake child care and other domestic duties. This provides an employment option for young unskilled migrants, while easing constraints on urban parents related to the availability, costs, and limited hours of child care services. However, the demand for young women for child care and domestic work may encourage them to migrate before they have finished their own education, with long-term consequences for their economic options. And this form employment has its own hazards.

Very little data is available on the number of girls or young women providing child care and domestic services or their conditions of employment. Some insights are available from a small-scale study of babysitting in Thimphu done in 2005. Most of the babysitters were female (91%). Most of the girls were aged 11–20 (74%). The parents of most of them were farmers, and many were from low-income households and had limited education. Although the author pointed out that this type of work presents opportunities to uneducated, marginalized young women, he also noted the risks of meager pay, overwork, and domestic violence. Also of concern was the lack of preparation the work provides for subsequent employment.²⁸

The larger regular surveys shed little light on this issue. Although 2011 Labour Force Survey had a section on child labor that focused on children aged 13–17 who worked outside the family, the data was not disaggregated by sex

or type of work.²⁹ The 2010 Bhutan Multiple Indicator Survey also included a section on child labor, in this case with some sex-disaggregation (showing that the proportion of children aged 12–14 doing paid work outside their family household was twice as high for girls as for boys), but it did not provide any information on the types of work done outside the family.³⁰

Domestic work is covered by labor legislation in Bhutan, but it is a particularly difficult field of employment to monitor. However, it is possible that the high demand and short supply of domestic and child workers may be promoting better working conditions and pay.

Government Commitments to Support Women or Gender Equality in the Sector

The 2008 *Constitution of the Kingdom of Bhutan* makes a commitment to protect women’s rights in relation to work:

The State shall endeavour to take appropriate measures to eliminate all forms of discrimination and exploitation against women including trafficking, prostitution, abuse, violence, harassment and intimidation at work in both public and private spheres. (Article 9, Principles of State Policy, clause 17.)

The Labour and Employment Act of Bhutan, 2007 also makes a strong statement prohibiting discrimination in recruitment, transfer, and training. It prohibits discrimination in working conditions and pay, and calls for equal pay for work of equal value. It prohibits sexual harassment and provides for maternity leave.

Several policy documents allude to issues or actions related to women’s participation in the labor market:

- The 10th plan seeks to promote greater access by women to economic opportunities and dignified employment; to information, markets, and services; to off-farm employment; and to skills training and microcredit.³¹

²⁷ National Statistics Bureau. *Bhutan Living Standards Survey 2012 Report* (BLSS 2012). Table A3.37.

²⁸ L. Dorji. 2005. Alu-tani (Baby-Sitting) Job in Thimphu – the Alternative Way-out for Rural Youth to Urban Centres. In L. Dorji and S. Kinga. *Youth in Bhutan: Education, Employment and Development*. Thimphu: Centre for Bhutan Studies. pp. 110–125.

²⁹ Ministry of Labour and Human Resources. *Labour Force Survey Report, 2011*. pp. 107–113.

³⁰ BMIS 2010 (footnote 25), pp. 161–163.

³¹ Gross National Happiness Commission. 2009. *Tenth Five-Year Plan*. Vol. 1. pp. 81–82.

- The Labour Administration Policy, 2007 includes a commitment to equal opportunity and treatment for women and men in employment, vocational training, job placement, and other services related to employment.
- The National Youth Policy, 2007 reiterates the commitment to ending all forms of gender discrimination; aims to facilitate women's access to professional positions and economic opportunities; and identifies a number of primary targets, including domestic workers (mainly women), *drayang* girls (bar workers and entertainers in urban areas), and uneducated young women in urban and rural areas.
- The Economic Development Policy, 2010 proposes a special focus on women's enterprises.
- The National Human Resource Development Policy, 2010 includes some special targeting to women in courses of technical training institutes.

The 11th plan sets a target of full employment, including full employment for youth, defined in both cases as reducing unemployment rates to 2.5%.³² It recognizes that reducing unemployment among female youth is particularly challenging, as meeting the target requires a reduction from the current 7.2%.³³

More generally, the 11th plan highlights the issue of women's participation in development as part of good governance. The performance indicators related to this are the reduction of female youth unemployment and the number of agencies implementing gender sensitive policies or gender mainstreaming strategies—both clearly important to this sector.³⁴

Looking Forward: Issues and Opportunities to Consider

This section highlights a number of issues and opportunities that merit consideration as part of employment strategies currently under development. (Also see this section in the chapters dealing with private sector,

agriculture and rural livelihoods, education, and urban development).

► *Gender mainstreaming in policies and strategies*

Two major initiatives currently under way—the preparation of a National Employment Policy and the implementation of the HRD Master Plan—offer important opportunities to take a consistent approach to supporting gender equality in the labor market and in the labor market services offered by government.

While policy documents such as those referred to in the previous section do make some references to female unemployment, or to the development of some special courses for women, they do not consistently or explicitly make the link between gender equality objectives and the various policy components. The result may be rather limited follow-up. For example, lesser access by women to training will not be dealt with by a few special courses for women, but rather through ensuring that all training courses are open to women, that women are encouraged to apply, and that there is a positive learning environment for women.

More consistent attention to sex-disaggregation of data is also needed to track whether women have the equitable access to and benefit from HRD and employment services. This would include sex-disaggregated data on all types of training, including trainees in government institutes or supported by government subsidies, apprenticeships, village skill development programs, etc. It would also include sex-disaggregated data on users of job placement services and the outcomes achieved.

► *Training and placement services for skills in demand*

Another area for attention is whether girls and women are encouraged and supported to take training in subjects and skills in demand in the labor market and for industries that are being targeted for accelerated development under the new flagship program, Rapid Investments in Selected Enterprises Program (rather than being streamed into predominantly female fields).

An increase in women's participation in training for occupations and skills that are in

³² 11th plan (footnote 6), pp. 17, 115, 162.

³³ 11th plan (footnote 6), pp. 121, 168.

³⁴ 11th plan (footnote 6), p. 121.

demand in the labor market (such as technical services and construction trades) could enlarge women's options and earnings (and contribute to closing the gaps with men in both options and earnings).

The challenge is not just to enable women to enroll and succeed in such training, but to follow up with potential employers who may have doubts and biases about women's capacities in these areas.

► ***Employer attitudes and practices***

Discussions of women's labor market situation tend to focus on characteristics of women that could limit their employment prospects and earnings potential. That is, they suggest that women do not have enough education; have not studied the right subjects; or have competing responsibilities for care of children, parents, family farms, etc. While these factors no doubt have an impact, it is important to consider the demand side as well as the supply side of the labor market. A consideration of what women have to offer needs to be complemented by a consideration of the approach of employers. For example:

- Have any studies been done of hiring outcomes for young men and women with similar training? Are the results similar or do they suggest that there are issues or biases to be addressed?
- Do employers have views on "appropriate work" for women and men, or on their relative capacities, that influence their hiring and promotion choices?
- Have the government and industry associations taken steps to inform employers of the law prohibiting discrimination and to assist employers gain a better understanding of how to ensure that recruitment, promotion, training, and pay practices are consistent with equality objectives?

► ***Protection provided by minimum standards legislation***

The enactment of the Labour and Employment Act of Bhutan, 2007 was a major step in setting a regulatory framework for employment. It addresses work hours, leave, wages, occupational health and safety, and employment contracts. It prohibits discrimination in recruitment, promotion,

and pay; prohibits sexual harassment; and provides for maternity leave.

These provisions constitute an important statement of principle, but their impact depends on further steps to make sure its provisions are known to employers and employees, and to monitor their implementation. As stated by the International Labour Organization in its 2003 report, *Time for Equality at Work*:

Effective enforcement of any law requires government investment in human and financial resources, establishment and operation of administrative and judicial structures, knowledge about the subject matter of the law, and worker and employer confidence in the system.³⁵

A problem with most enforcement systems is that they are complaints-based and thus rely on individual workers or their representatives to activate the law, which can mean that they are unevenly applied and in particular deny protection to more disadvantaged workers.³⁶

► ***Child care as an issue of equal employment opportunities***

The issue of child care has to date been given limited attention in data collection or policy as an issue of equal employment opportunities for women.

While some data on child care is provided by the Ministry of Education and the Bhutan Multiple Indicator Survey, the focus of both is on the education and safety of the child. This is an important perspective, but it does not cover the related but somewhat different perspective of the options available to working parents. The questions of interest include the following: What options are available to working parents to ensure their children are in a safe and stimulating environment while the parents are at work? What choices are available to care for children in different age groups, and to bridge the gap between the length of the school and the working day? What are the costs? Where formal care is not available or not affordable, what do parents

³⁵ International Labour Organization (ILO). 2003. *Time for Equality at Work: Global Report under the Follow-up to the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work*. Geneva. p. 61.

³⁶ Time for Equality (footnote 35), p. 62.

do? Is a shortage of child care a factor in women's lower labor force participation in urban areas? What are the implications of the lack or cost of child care on the types or location of employment of mothers, and their working hours and earnings? And how does it affect fathers?'

A related set of questions concerns the private employment of babysitters to care for children. Who are they and how do they fare? Are they mostly girls? How old are they, and what education and skills do they have? How long do they work and how much are they paid? Are there adequate protections for workers in this category?

► ***Leadership role of the public sector***

Governments have an important leadership role in demonstrating how an employer can structure and implement equitable employment practices, including practices related to recruitment, promotion, training, working hours, leave, and pensions.

Consideration could be given to developing specific policies to

- review selection practices to remove possible sources of bias against women;
- ensure that women and men have equal opportunities to participate in training, including training courses, seminars, placements, etc.;
- encourage women to apply for senior jobs;
- review terms and conditions of employment in order to identify and modify elements that have the effect of disadvantaging women either directly or indirectly;
- review the relative pay levels of women and men to determine whether occupations in which women predominate are paid at the same levels as male-dominated jobs requiring similar levels of skill, effort, and responsibility; and
- provide incentives or rewards for managers who demonstrate leadership in implementing an equal opportunities approach.

APPENDIX A. Tip Sheet on Integrating Gender Perspectives in Analysis and Planning in the Sector

STEP 1: What are the positive outcomes for women or gender equality that could be achieved through gender mainstreaming?	STEP 2: What are some of the questions we should ask to better understand gender equality issues and women's needs in these areas?	STEP 3: What steps or strategies could be considered or adapted to move forward in these areas?
<p>Policy, planning, and decision making in the sector:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Increased awareness among decision makers of gender disparities in the labor market → More detailed data and research to clarify issues and inform human resource development strategies for equitable outcomes → More consistent attention to gender equality issues in analyses, strategies, and legislation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do labor market surveys provide the sex-disaggregated data required to assess and compare labor market experience of women and men (both youth and adults)? • Do planners and decision makers have the knowledge and skills to assess gender equality issues in the labor market? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allocate resources and expertise to ensuring that the labor market data available to planners is sufficient to assess whether opportunities and outcomes are equitable for women and men and to identify issues to be addressed. • Identify gaps in knowledge about the labor market experience of women as compared to men (both youth and adults), and allocate resources and expertise for studies and research to bridge these gaps. • Establish links between government officials and gender equality advocates (academics, research institutes, and nongovernment organizations).
<p>Employment services for jobseekers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Equitable access by women to employment services → Shorter duration of unemployment for women jobseekers → More women find jobs that make full use of their skills and knowledge 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there data to assess whether there is equal access and benefit by young women and men to employment services? What do users of services think about the services received (and how does the feedback of young women and men compare)? • Are officials and service providers aware of commitments to equal employment opportunities, and is this reflected in the services provided? • Have outreach efforts to employers been made to promote equitable consideration of women candidates and to ensure employers are aware of the supply of women graduates across professional fields? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that data on services provided is consistently collected by sex, and that follow-up studies on graduates also disaggregate data, to allow better identification of issues to be addressed. • Provide opportunities for employment services officials to increase their awareness of gaps in equal opportunities and biases against women in the labor market, and to identify ways they can contribute to strengthening equal opportunities in implementing their mandates. • Engage sector and industry associations as partners in promotion of equitable employment practices for women and men and better knowledge of related legislation.
<p>Technical and vocational training for youth provided in technical training institutes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Increased access by female youth to training in occupations that are in demand and well-paid → Increased numbers of girls with technical and vocational skills in the labor force 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are girls and young women encouraged to consider the full range of technical and vocational options on offer (and not only training for skills generally considered “suitable” for women)? • Comparing courses in which girls predominate with those of boys, are both in equal demand in the labor market and likely to have similar levels of pay? • Are private sector training providers made aware of commitments to equal employment opportunities for women and the responsibilities they have to reflect that commitment in the training they provide? • What are the post-training job placement rates of girls compared to boys? How effective have post-training placement services been in assisting girls to find employment? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertake outreach in schools to increase awareness among students of labor market realities, including skills in demand and average wages in skilled work, and encourage both girls and boys to widen their perspectives on options for girls. • Set targets and devise implementation strategies to increase the number of girls in market-relevant training. • Undertake outreach to employers in support of consideration of girls with training in “nontraditional” skills. • Explore the potential for mentorship programs to increase awareness of women's participation in “nontraditional” areas and to provide support for new entrants.

APPENDIX A. Tip Sheet on Integrating Gender Perspectives in Analysis and Planning in the Sector		
STEP 1: What are the positive outcomes for women or gender equality that could be achieved through gender mainstreaming?	⇒ STEP 2: What are some of the questions we should ask to better understand gender equality issues and women's needs in these areas?	⇒ STEP 3: What steps or strategies could be considered or adapted to move forward in these areas?
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that all data about training is collected by sex to allow analysis of access to training opportunities as well as access in different skill areas, locations, types of institute, etc.
<p>Other training targeted to particular groups or industries or skills:</p> <p>→ More opportunities for women to learn or upgrade skills in market-relevant areas</p>	<p>⇒</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have there been any assessments of women's access to the training provided outside technical training institutes? Are women and men similarly distributed across fields or clustered in areas considered "suitable" to each? • How well have women been represented in the village skills development program; in skills training for information and communication technologies (ICT); or in each of the programs for specific sectors, such as ICT, health, tourism and hospitality, and construction? What data or information are available about relative success rates of women and men in finding employment or improving their incomes following such training? <p>⇒</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that data on enrollments and outcomes by field of study and sex are gathered systematically. • Review data on enrollments and outcomes by field of study and sex to determine whether women are equally represented and have similar performance, and develop strategies to bridge any gaps identified.
<p>Labor standards and labor regulations and enforcement:</p> <p>→ Greater awareness among employers and the workforce (women and men) about labor standards related to nondiscrimination, including the prohibition of discrimination in recruitment, pay, and promotion</p> <p>→ Better awareness of other regulations in support of equal participation by women, such as regulations related to sexual harassment and provisions for maternity leave</p> <p>→ Improved compliance with labor standards for gender equality in employment</p>	<p>⇒</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent are workers, jobseekers, and employers aware of labor regulations prohibiting discrimination by sex in recruitment, promotion, and pay? Are the regulations about sexual harassment generally known? • How well has the complaint mechanism functioned to address violations of labor standards related to women's rights and to promote broader compliance? • Have officials involved in dispute resolution and enforcement had opportunities to examine their own biases about women and gender equality in the workplace? Have they had any training about the interpretation of labor standards and how to assess whether they have been implemented appropriately? <p>⇒</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertake a study to assess the extent to which gender equality in employment has been achieved, focusing the analysis on selected industries and occupations to allow for focused follow-up strategies. • Implement an awareness campaign on women's rights to a nondiscriminatory and safe work environment, and the mechanisms to follow up on problems. • Target employers in industries and occupations where women are in a minority to ensure that they too are aware of labor standards on discrimination. • Consider how labor inspectors can contribute to raising awareness, preventing discrimination, and resolving disputes (e.g., by mandating them to undertake such activities and providing training in discrimination issues).
<p><i>Dzongkhag</i> and <i>Genog</i> development plans and local employment services:</p> <p>→ Greater awareness of national policy framework on equality in employment</p> <p>→ Greater efforts to support women's access to economic and income opportunities (from employment, entrepreneurial activities, etc.)</p>	<p>⇒</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the views of local officials on women's roles, capacities, and rights in the workforce? • Are local officials aware of and in agreement with labor standards regulations intended to support equality in the labor force? • Do local development plans reflect an equal opportunity approach in the strategies for employment creation and local economic development? <p>⇒</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support local officials to obtain a better understanding of employment opportunities and constraints in their area for women as well as men. • Review local development plans from the perspective of women's needs for employment and income, and the national commitment to equal opportunities in employment. • Assist <i>Dzongkhag</i> officers to collect and report information on jobseekers by sex.

APPENDIX B. Useful Resources for Gender Analysis in the Sector

Bhutan-based background information and gender-specific resources

Useful sector overviews and background documents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ministry of Labour and Human Resources. 2010. <i>Report on National Human Resource Development Needs of the Kingdom of Bhutan</i>. www.molhr.gov.bt/images/stories/ro.pdf United Nations Development Programme. 2012. <i>Employment Challenges in Bhutan. Discussion Paper</i>. Thimphu. Danish International Development Assistance. 2012 (Danida). <i>Technical Review of the Vocational Education and Training</i>. Social Sector Programme Support (SSPS) Bhutan. Report to the Ministry of Labour and Human Resources. Deloitte. 2012. Three reports in the series: <i>Formulation of National Employment Policy for Bhutan</i>. Assessment Report; Implementation Strategies; National Employment Policy. Reports to the Ministry of Labour and Human Resources.
Relevant policy statements and legislation (other than five-year plans)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Economic Development Policy 2010</i>. www.gnhc.gov.bt/wp-content/uploads/2012/04/EDP.pdf Ministry of Labour and Human Resources. 2013. <i>11th FYP HRD Master Plan for the Economic Sectors (2013–2018)</i>. www.molhr.gov.bt/molhrsite/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/Master-Plan-book.pdf Ministry of Labour and Human Resources. <i>National Human Resource Development Policy of the Kingdom of Bhutan 2010</i>. www.molhr.gov.bt/images/stories/nnr.pdf <i>Labour and Employment Act of Bhutan 2007</i>. www.molhr.gov.bt/publication/labouract.pdf or http://oag.gov.bt/resources/acts/. Related to this are a set of regulations to guide implementation, www.molhr.gov.bt/molhrsite/?page_id=579 (see “regulations on working conditions”) <i>Labour Administration Policy</i>. (not dated, likely 2007) www.molhr.gov.bt/molhrsite/?page_id=579 <i>Youth Policy 2011</i>: www.gnhc.gov.bt/2012/04/national-youth-policy and policies listed in the chapters on education and private sector development.
Data sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ministry of Labour and Human Resources. <i>Annual Labour Force Survey</i>. www.molhr.gov.bt/molhrsite/?page_id=577 Ministry of Labour and Human Resources. <i>Annual Labour Market Information Bulletin</i> (referred to as LMI Bulletin). www.molhr.gov.bt/molhrsite/?page_id=577 Ministry of Education. <i>Annual Education Statistics, 2012</i>. www.education.gov.bt/aes Royal Civil Service Commission. Civil Service Statistics. www.rcsc.gov.bt/statistics.asp
Research and analysis on gender equality in the labor market in Bhutan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Commission for Women and Children and World Bank (South Asia Region). Forthcoming. <i>Bhutan Gender Policy Note</i>. National Commission for Women and Children. Forthcoming study on factors influencing unemployment among women and men in Bhutan.
Other resources	
Research and articles on gender equality in the labor market	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> World Bank. 2012. <i>World Development Report 2012: Gender Equality and Development</i>. Chapter 5: Gender differences in employment and why they matter. http://go.worldbank.org/6R2KGVEXP0 International Labour Organization (ILO). 2009. <i>Gender Equality at the Heart of Decent Work</i>. International Labour Conference, 98th Session, Report VI. www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_norm/---relconf/documents/meetingdocument/wcms_105119.pdf ILO. 2003. <i>Time for Equality at Work: Global Report under the follow-up to the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work</i>. www.ilo.org/global/publications/ilo-bookstore/order-online/books/WCMS_PUBL_9221128717_EN/lang--it/index.htm ILO. 2007. <i>Equality at Work: Tackling the Challenges: Global Report under the follow-up to the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work</i>. www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/---webdev/documents/publication/wcms_082607.pdf ILO. 2008. <i>Work, Income and Gender Equality in East Asia: Action Guide</i>. By N. Haspels and E. Majurin, Subregional Office for East Asia. www.ilo.int/wcmsp5/groups/public/---asia/---ro-bangkok/documents/publication/wcms_101719.pdf

Bhutan: Gender Equality Diagnostic of Selected Sectors

Bhutan has experienced extraordinary change since the 1960s when it opened itself to the world and started the process of planned development. It has transformed itself from a subsistence economy into a middle-income country with rising human development indicators. Yet progress comes with new challenges. These include differences in living conditions and opportunities between rural and urban areas that fuel rural–urban migration, labor shortages in agriculture, and unemployment. There are gender dimensions to each of these challenges, prompting the Government of Bhutan and its development partners to mainstream gender in its policies, programs, and projects. This publication intends to support this process by providing insights into gender issues in agriculture and rural livelihoods, education, energy, environment, private sector development, transport, urban development, and work and unemployment.

About the Asian Development Bank

ADB's vision is an Asia and Pacific region free of poverty. Its mission is to help its developing member countries reduce poverty and improve the quality of life of their people. Despite the region's many successes, it remains home to approximately two-thirds of the world's poor: 1.6 billion people who live on less than \$2 a day, with 733 million struggling on less than \$1.25 a day. ADB is committed to reducing poverty through inclusive economic growth, environmentally sustainable growth, and regional integration.

Based in Manila, ADB is owned by 67 members, including 48 from the region. Its main instruments for helping its developing member countries are policy dialogue, loans, equity investments, guarantees, grants, and technical assistance.

About the National Commission for Women and Children

The NCWC was established in 2004 by the Royal Government of Bhutan to stimulate and support the implementation of Bhutan's commitments to women's equality and the protection of children. NCWC became an autonomous agency in 2008 and has now a strategic policy and advisory role. The Commissioners include members of the senior civil service and representatives of the private sector; they meet twice a year under the leadership of a Cabinet Minister who serves as the Chairperson. Operational activities are undertaken by a small secretariat headed by a Director General. The Women's Division is responsible for initiatives related to gender mainstreaming, gender equality and women's empowerment.

About the United Nations in Bhutan

The United Nations began operations in Bhutan in 1974. Since then, UN agencies, funds, and programmes have been working on national development needs and improving the economic and social conditions of the people of Bhutan. Six UN agencies are resident in the country—FAO, UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF, WFP and WHO—while thirteen support the country from their regional offices or headquarters. The UN Bhutan One Programme (2014-2018) sets out the collective response of the UN system to the priorities in the Government's 11th Five Year Plan. The One Programme has four Outcome Areas: sustainable development, essential social services, gender equality and child protection, and good governance and participation.